TAD SHELDON

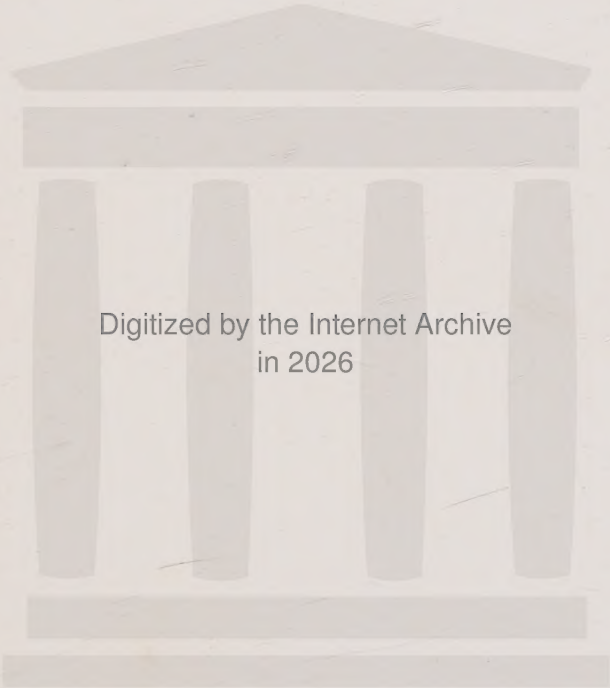
BOY SCOUT

JOHN FLEMING WILSON

John Douglass
from
Miss Force.
&
Miss Peterson

Jan 30, 1917,

TAD SHELDON
BOY SCOUT



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/tadsheldonboysco0000john

"AND IN THE EVENING I WENT UP AND ATE TOO MANNY ENTIRELY."

TAD SHELDON BOY SCOUT

STORIES OF HIS PATROL

BY

JOHN FLEMING WILSON

Author of "The Man Who Came Back," etc., etc

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
DOUGHERTY

Master of Himself, Servant of All
—*Indian Motto*

New York
STURGIS & WALTON
COMPANY
1914

COPYRIGHT, 1913, BY
R. HAROLD PAGET

Set up and electrotyped. Published June, 1913
Reprinted, January, 1914.

TO

ARTHUR WALFRID NELSON

COMMANDER OF
THE PACIFIC MAIL S.S. KOREA

My dear Captain—

These stories of adventure along our coast could be dedicated to no one whose own life has illustrated so well the virtues of bravery, honor and loyalty. In memory of old days from Panamá to the North I beg to offer this volume to you. I am proud to sign myself respectfully and affectionately your friend,

JOHN FLEMING WILSON

Central Valley, N. Y.,
Christmas, 1912

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Making of a Tenderfoot	3
The Fourth Commandment	33
When the Rivers Ran White	64
His Third Enlistment	95
Salvage	109
Night Tides	129
Tad Sheldon, Second-Class Scout	144
The Seat of Judgment	172
Tad Sheldon, Crusader	188
The Ghost of Eagle Mountain	208

ILLUSTRATIONS

"And in the evening I went up and ate too manny entirely" . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

They all saw a tremendous sea hasting in toward them 60

"He would not row, and thin I opened up me lip and told the felly what I thought of him" . . 182

TAD SHELDON'S PATROL

TAD SHELDON—Son of Surfman No. 1 of the Yaquina Bay Life Saving Crew and patrol leader.

CHRISTOPHER CARSON—Son of former Surfman No. 4—his father was killed while on duty at a shipwreck—and assistant patrol leader.

WILLIAM ROBINSON—Usually called "Young" Robinson; the son of a wealthy Portland business man.

TIMOTHY CULVER—Son of a sailor sometimes employed as an extra-man on the life saving crew.

ROBERT SPENCER—Son of a member of the life saving crew.

THE KID—alias Thomas Foster, son of a widowed mother; fishes for a living.

WILLIAM MILLIGAN—Son of a marine engineer.

OTHER CHARACTERS

DR. CARTER—The physician at The Bay.

CAPTAIN WELLANDER—Inspector in the Life Saving Service.

CAPTAIN EVANS—Keeper of the Yaquina Bay Station.

CAPTAIN HANSEN—A sea captain.

MICHAEL O'ROURKE—Chief Engineer of a Light Vessel.

TAD SHELDON
BOY SCOUT

TAD SHELDON, BOY SCOUT

THE MAKING OF A TENDERFOOT

TAD SHELDON sat under the old lighthouse on the bluff and stared out at the Pacific. The last run of salmon had gone its way up the Yaquina river, the last tourists were departing for the world outside and the first school of tom-cod had not yet appeared. It was the lifeless period that intervenes between Oregon's summer and the winter. Tad felt the dulness of the day. The single thing within view that promised the smallest excitement was a launch that was slowly making its way from the North towards the whistling buoy at the outer edge of the bar.

"It's Olsen's boat," he thought to himself. "But what did he cross out the Siletz for in such weather? And if he can make it in here he'll be lucky."

As if in confirmation of his unspoken comment on Olsen's lack of sense the Nor'wester piled a huge seething sea right into the narrow river mouth. The roar of its breaking struck the boy's quick ear

and he stood up to scan the launch and see what its foolish occupants were going to do.

"Two men," he said aloud. "And I'll bet they never saw that sea and don't know enough to be careful." He paused a moment in some doubt as to whether he should wait longer or take the responsibility of going up to the life saving station and telephoning to the keeper at Toledo, whither he had taken his crew to meet a carload of supplies. It would take the crew a good hour and a half to get back, and it would be only an hour before the launch won the bar and would probably need assistance.

At this moment he saw young Willie Robinson coming along the path towards the lighthouse. Willie was an exceedingly well dressed, self-opinionated youth whose father lived "outside" in Portland where, by Willie's account, he was a very big man indeed.

"Hello!" said Willie, brushing the sand off his white shoes.

"Hello!" Tad answered with dignity befitting a scout leader and one who might condescend even to a Robinson.

"Say, Sheldon, when are you going to let me join the scouts? Mother says we're going to stay on here for the winter, and she says I'm entitled to join the scouts, even if you do say no."

Tad flushed. "Can ye swim yet?"

"No."

"Make a fire?"

"Don't have to."

"Row a boat?"

"Look here," Willie said defiantly, "I've got my dollar, and I guess my mother knows what she is talking about when she says that I'd make a good scout."

There was no answer for Tad was intently watching the launch whose manœuvres he could not understand. It was headed inshore into the bight north of the jetty — a fatal place for any craft. Then he caught sight of a small speck that moved erratically in the air, just above the head of one of the persons in the boat, fixed his eyes intently on it and then shouted in full comprehension that it was a signal. He leaped to the outermost point of the bluff and responded, Willie at his elbow.

"What are they doing, Tad?"

"Wigwagging," was the curt response. He slowly answered with his arms. "It's Kid Olsen," he muttered. "I must give him the danger warning."

Slowly and carefully, straining his eyes to see across the long mile of water between his vantage point and the soaring launch, he pieced together the motions that the youth in the boat was making. His lips were compressed; he saw that the elder

Olsen had no intention of trying to run the bar but was trying to get into communication with the lookout station. Evidently neither of them saw the figure of the boy on the bluff. Against the background of trees it was not to be expected. Assured of this Tad raced to the lighthouse door, took the winding iron steps two at a time, and in a minute appeared on the top of the lantern-roof. They could see him there. But it was still impossible for him to read the signals except for a letter here and there. He heard Willie panting on the steps below and called down to him to take from the rack the big telescope the look-outs used and hand it up.

Bracing himself he poised the heavy tube and directed it on the launch. The figure leaped before his eyes. He recognised old man Olsen and his son, the latter wigwagging. He read the letters carefully:

"M-o-t-h-e-r s-c-k. S-e-n-d d-o-c-t-o-r. S-e-n-d d-o-c-t-o-r."

Tad saw the meaning of this, seemed even to catch the strained expressions on the two faces turned to their solitary hope. He signalled back that he understood, gave a danger warning and saw the launch slowly head around again for the whistling buoy riding on the steadily increasing swell.

To Willie he explained curtly, "It's Old Man Olsen and the Kid from the Siletz. Old Lady Ol-

sen is sick and they've come for Doc Carter to go up there. They'll anchor by the whistler."

"All night?"

"Till the life saving crew come back from up the river. Captain Wellander'll look after 'em. What I've got to do is to get my men together and hunt up Doc Carter and tell him to get up to Mrs. Olsen's. I'll bet she's mighty sick or they'd have come down by the beach and not risked it by sea such weather as this."

"Why didn't they come by the beach?" asked Willie, dropping down the lighthouse stairs behind Tad.

"Because it would have taken 'em all day long and that launch can make the thirty miles from the Siletz in three hours. They expected to take the doc back with 'em, too."

"And what are you going to do?"

"Me? Get the band together, telephone to the crew that the launch is off the whistler and can't get in and get Doc Carter. That's what I'm going to do," Tad replied.

The two boys raced along the bluff towards the town, casting occasional glances back at the bar. The launch had anchored and was swinging to her light cable, a mere speck rising and falling on the rolling swells.

"They're all right till the crew comes," Tad panted.

Willie touched his companion on the elbow. "I'll go and telephone to Toledo," he said.

For one instant the scout leader hesitated. He glanced at Willie Robinson's face and then grudgingly said, "All right, kid. I'll hunt up Doc Carter and the boys."

Fifteen minutes later Willie ran up to Tad as he stood alone in front of the post-office. "I 'phoned all right," he panted. "Where are the boys?"

"There isn't one in town — all gone up to Yaquina fishing in Norman's skiff," was the disgusted answer.

"Find the doctor?"

"He's over at Nye Beach. I've got to put this thing through alone."

"Let me go with you," pleaded Willie.

"You don't belong," Tad returned, not unkindly. "And what could you do? I've got to get Doc and see if he can go, and then look after the launch and everything."

"Well," said Willie, "let me stay with you, anyway."

This allowed, the two set out up the hill that lay between them and Nye Beach. They breasted it silently and only when they reached the top and saw the cottages on the other side did Tad say anything. "Nobody knows where to find the doctor. We've got to hunt for him."

That "we" brought a brighter light into Willie's eyes. He stepped on more confidently.

It was an hour before they found the man they sought, and it was getting late into the afternoon, with a heavy, chill fog rolling in from the sea, laden with the dull odour of brine and weed from the upper headlands. The physician listened while Tad told his story and then nodded. "Yes, Mrs. Olsen is pretty sick, I expect. But I don't know where she lives now, since they moved up the Siletz to their new claim. I can't go to-night, Tad. It's thirty mile to the bay and no one here knows how far up the river. Couldn't make it in the dark."

"But she might die!" Tad protested. "Old Man Olsen wouldn't have come all the way this weather if it hadn't been he was terribly anxious."

Dr. Carter, tall, angular and bronzed, stared down at the flushed faces of the two lads. But he shook his head. "I'll go first thing in the morning," he said gently.

For a moment Tad's eyes saw old lady Olsen, quite alone and dying in some one of the lonely cabins that lie hidden in the vast Siletz forest. He shook his head determinedly. "You've got to go, Doc," he said bluntly. "I'll go with you and pack your bag and cook your supper, too."

"But we can't find the place, son," the doctor protested. "And nobody could drive a team up

the coast at night, anyway. Do you expect me to walk?"

"I wigwagged Olsen and the kid I'd find you and you'd go."

There was a silence and then Willie Robinson said quietly, "I'll go, too."

Tad quenched his impulse to scorn this offer, for he felt that he was fighting a losing battle and needed all possible assistance. No one knew better than he the force of the doctor's arguments, nor how often this same doctor had risked his life on some errand of mercy. But the Siletz at night! The hardiest had never dared *that*. And yet —

He kicked at a pebble and said in a low voice, "I suppose I'll have to go alone. The old lady has nobody with her. She's up there by herself. I'm going, anyway. It's my duty."

"I'll go with you," said Willie calmly.

Dr. Carter surrendered. "All right. We'll all go. Now, Tad, I want my other medicine case, and tell Fogarty to send a team over to take us as far as the lighthouse, anyway. We'll trudge the rest of it. If we can make Sijota's by midnight, we can go on from there in the morning. Now hurry!"

So it happened that an hour later Dr. Carter, accompanied by the two boys, was riding in a heavy waggon along the fog-shrouded beach towards the

North. They could barely see the waves, whose thunder was echoed from the cliffs above them, and the horses snorted uneasily as they footed it now and again across some slippery rock that emerged like a whale's back from the sand. They reached the height on which Cape Foulweather light stood just at dark, and there the driver refused to go further. "First storm of the season," he growled, pointing to the trees blowing overhead. "Wind's hauling dead around. You'd ought n't to ha' come, doc. You'll never get there. Ye might make Chatterton's but even that 'ud be a tough tramp — and these kids with you, too!"

"Robinson can go home," said Tad curtly. "I'll go ahead with the doctor."

There was a stubbornness in every tone of Willie's voice as he said, "I'm going along. I said I would."

"I don't think your mother would like it," said Dr. Carter hastily.

"I guess my mother's game," was the reply. "I ran in and told her I was going, and she said 'yes.'"

"You'd best go back," insisted the doctor, scanning the neat suit, white shoes and soft hands of the lad. "This is a hard trip for any one."

Then Willie Robinson proved that he was learning things. Without a word he looked at Tad for orders. The scout leader understood the silent of-

fer of implicit obedience and rose to the occasion magnificently.

"You can come along," he said, and Dr. Carter without further argument led the way through the mud and morass that intervened between them and the next stretch of good road.

For two long hours they traversed a dimly lit and wholly wearisome trail that skirted the bluff, and finally let them down on the shale of the beach. Here Dr. Carter looked over his two attendants and said drily, "Tad, there's supper in that small bag of mine you are carrying. Can you make a fire with this wet driftwood?"

"Willie," said Tad promptly, "climb up under that big log by the spring and chop out some dry stuff and bring it here." And before the doctor's somewhat unbelieving eyes the scout leader prepared a temporary camp in the lee of a huge stump, made the fire, broiled the bacon on a stick and brewed coffee in an empty tin can.

As they munched the last of their meal the daylight died into the blackness of fog and wind. The solitary gleam was from the dying fire, the only sound the immense tumult of the sea breaking along the sharp reefs or tumbling headlong against the base of the jutting cliffs. Dr. Carter stared thoughtfully at the faces of his two companions: Tad was capably intent on cleaning his knife, seeing to the safety of his matches and the lacing of

his shoes. Willie Robinson was trying to be steady and calm under a terrible weariness.

"We've come eight miles over a hard road," the doctor remarked casually. "I think, as we have twenty-two more to cover before daylight, that we had better sleep an hour, boys. Build up the fire, Tad, and fix some kind of alarm so that we will waken at the right time."

Both boys busily brought more wood and Tad carefully adjusted the end of a long limb between two good sized logs and built another fire about its butt. "It ought to burn through enough to fall in about an hour," he ventured.

Then the three of them stretched themselves out in the lee of the fire and were silent. Promptly the doctor and Tad Sheldon were asleep, but to Willie Robinson the novelty, excitement and horror of the moment were too much to allow him to rest. He had never slept out of doors before, nor been miles from home in the darkness, nor eaten bacon broiled at an open fire with only coffee for sauce. Every muscle in his body ached, too; he would like to have cried for homesickness. Yet he lay still.

At last the branch was charred through and fell gently over and touched the faces of the sleepers. A moment later they were awake and on their feet.

The next three hours were always to stretch out

in Willie Robinson's memory as the longest of his life. For endless and untold years he travelled over great boulders, forded swift streams running darkly into the sea, scrambled over piles of driftwood with the surf flashing for his feet, hovered trembling and cold in the lee of enormous rocks until Dr. Carter's voice would assure him that it was the opportunity to race around before the next wave drove up against them. And at the end of the enormous hours he had to breast the hill that led to the top of the headland known as Otter Rock — to climb miles up a miry, rutted, stony road where the dripping branches of trees held out warning fingers or clutched at one's shoulders as one passed. And then, like a boy falling out of bed, he woke up in a very great darkness. He vaguely saw the doctor's tall form ahead of him. Tad Sheldon was scurrying in the brush by the roadside hunting for the sign-tree whose blazed trunk marked the trail to Whale Cove, their next objective point. And in Willie's face blew a wondrous stiff wind, the fresh, scentless, strong gale that only blows at great heights. It refreshed him, bore away into the past all the horrors and troubles of the endless hours. For that instant, weary as he was, the boy felt the prodigious tang of adventure. The world spread limitless and mysterious before him. What was hardship, darkness, hunger, toil, even death itself compared to the tremendous pos-

sibilities of the unknown? Young Robinson was never to lose wholly the delight of that hour.

The sign-tree found, the three of them, quite cheerfully, stumbled down a rocky trail that led across the swell of a great, smooth hill, deeply rutted by sheep paths. They swung along the edges of cliffs where they heard in the darkness the imminent noise of surf below them, crept warily round indentations from whose depths rose the roar of milling water, slipped hastily over patches trampled by cattle drinking out of some rivulet and at two o'clock, by Dr. Carter's watch, reached Whale Cove. Here they once more took the road and hurried on to Depot Bay, impassable except at low water. Tad Sheldon said the tide would be out at three o'clock that morning.

But when they arrived at the great bowl of the bay, an enormous well in the face of the cliff and with only a narrow entrance for the sea to enter, Dr. Carter called a halt. "We won't try to cross until daylight," he said curtly. "I know this place and from the noise I know there is water in the channels. Anyway, in this darkness we couldn't be sure of striking the other side at the right place and if we didn't —"

There was no need to finish that sentence. Others had tried fording Depot Bay and never found the opposite side.

Once more Tad built a fire, this time among the

dripping hemlocks. Young Robinson helped as best he could and won a word's commendation by finding some pitchwood. The blaze was hardly a success scenically, but it served to illumine their refuge and keep them warm. When the first ghost-like rays of light permeated the forest they again pushed on.

By the time they had emerged on the last stretch of their journey to the mouth of the Siletz the wind was rising steadily from the southwest and they saw that an angry sea was rising. But with the wind at their backs they made good progress and at nine in the morning stumbled wearily up to the long, low house known as Sijota's.

In fifteen minutes the three of them were seated at a table devouring salmon steaks fried in seal-oil, salt-rising bread and baked potatoes. But the news given them by Sijota himself was discouraging. Mrs. Olsen was out on the claim, twelve miles up the Siletz river and then three miles on Skunk Creek — a stiff day's travel for strong and unwearied men — a heart-breaking prospect for Dr. Carter and his boy companions. But they refused to stay, and set forth in a small skiff up the swift current of one of the most turbulent rivers in the West, Tad and the doctor rowing while Robinson steered.

The mountains on either side of them rose into the gray tumult of a stormy sky. Now and again

a heavy gust would whiten the river's face and make pulling against it seem an impossibility. But to young Robinson the scene was a delight, though his throat was dry for lack of sleep, and he knew that this same road must be traversed again before he could see his mother. But he was having an actual experience — something to tell, even if he could never be a boy scout. And he knew now that he was unworthy of the honour; he had seen Tad Sheldon building fires, cooking meals, keeping going through wind and storm and black night with a sureness and steadiness that had made him to all intents and purposes Dr. Carter's equal. He observed that the physician deferred to Tad.

He wished he had learned to row.

At noon Tad said hoarsely, "That's Skunk Creek in there," and pointed to an opening in the great forest wall. A slender bridge of saplings ran across it.

The doctor scanned it anxiously. "Are you sure?"

Tad nodded, pointed to a tall fir with a drooping limb, a white pillar of rock beyond the bridge. "Those are the marks Sijota gave me. He helped Olsen build his cabin."

They cached the skiff, took the doctor's bags and straightened their cramped limbs on a grassy tree trunk. Then they proceeded up the raw trail that entered the cañon. A hundred yards on Tad

pointed to a couple of cases of gasoline under the alders. "That's for Olsen's launch," he said.

But there was little more conversation. The trail grew worse and worse, and Dr. Carter looked thoughtful when an occasional resounding boom from the hills on either side announced that the gale was blowing big trees over. None knew better than he the menace of that. But when they finally came in sight of a clearing and a cabin in its midst he remarked to the boys that it was a good clearing and there was little danger from falling limbs.

"I wonder if Mrs. Olsen is all right?" Tad suggested as they hurried towards the closed door.

"There's no smoke coming out of the stovepipe," Robinson observed, and was immediately rewarded by Tad's response, "That looks as if she was helpless, anyway."

They stood in the doorway, the two boys, while Dr. Carter stepped in. Even Tad, accustomed all his life to rough quarters and the rude discomfort of pioneer homes, was struck by the extreme desolation of the dim interior. A gray, chilly light flowed in through the single small window. A torn blanket lay tumbled on the adze-made floor. A sack of flour was spilling its damp contents on the wretched table and his quick eyes saw that the wood stacked up behind the stove was green. The fire was out.

But almost immediately they heard a weak voice and knew that they were in time. Aware of this Tad calmly handed Robinson the axe that leaned against the door-jamb with an injunction to go out and get some pitchwood. Himself he put about to light the fire, leaving Dr. Carter to attend to his part of the affair.

The stove hot, water on in the dish-pan and the contents of the larder examined, sorted and collected, Tad ventured to peer in at the door of the lean-to that served as a bedroom. He saw the old woman propped up on pillows, very silent, with closed eyes, her mouth open. The doctor was holding her wrist in his lean fingers, careless of the fact that his hat was still dripping on his head, his clothes covered with mire, his boots slowly leaking water. He merely nodded to Tad, who stepped on in to hear the muttered words, "Young man, we got here just in time. Fix up the fire and make strong coffee."

Tad was not content with this. Just half an hour later he surveyed his achievements and said to Robinson, "As soon as the spuds are done, we'll eat."

There was no answer. The boy had collapsed and could only give vent to the dry sobs of absolute exhaustion.

Tad poured out a cup of coffee and vouchsafed a single sentence of encouragement: "I'm dead tired myself, and I'm used to the trail."

That evening at sundown Dr. Carter viewed the two boys curled up on the floor by the stove asleep and nodded his wise old head. Then he returned to the sick room, fixed a heavy home-made chair by the bedside and settled himself down for a night's vigil by the unconscious and paralyzed woman. Outside the storm howled and the timber crashed, but it disturbed no one in the cabin.

The next morning early Tad wakened his companion and stirred him into activity. They found the doctor sound asleep in the chair and Tad tiptoed to the sick woman's side. Ascertaining that she was breathing gently and easily he went out again.

"Let the doc sleep," he warned Robinson. "We'll start the fire and get some breakfast. How d'ye feel?"

"Sore."

"Sure. So'd any one as soft as you. You'll harden up."

"Lemme start the fire," said Robinson bashfully.

"All right," said Tad indifferently. "Get busy. I'll make some biscuits."

Young Robinson worked diligently with his knife, cut pitchwood and got the stove hot. Then Tad stopped him as he was about to put in another armful of pine. "That stuff's precious. This is only the beginning of winter. That wood is still green, but it'll burn if ye mix 'em properly — one bit of

pitch, more than half centre wood and then a couple of sticks of the sapwood. See?"

Wakened for breakfast Dr. Carter looked thoughtfully at his two helpers before remarking, "I wonder if the Olsens can get here to-day."

"No," Tad replied promptly. "Blowing a gale and with high water in Depot Bay they can't reach there early enough to ford or else it'll be so late they can't even get to Sijota's before to-morrow."

"Somebody must go to Newport," the doctor went on. "I must have medicines and supplies. I think she may get well, but I must have the things to do with."

"We'd better start right back, then, Young Robinson and I," Tad said simply.

"I — I hate to see you start in this weather — maybe we could manage along —"

"We're going now," said the capable scout leader, setting to work making a small pack of provisions for himself and his companion. "What do you want?"

Dr. Carter handed over a written list, gave the lads his blessing and watched them set off down the trail. With a long, weary sigh he turned back into the cabin and refreshed the fire. Outside the rain was coming down steadily. "I wonder —" he muttered to himself. He dared not utter his fears.

Once more on the trail Tad took pains to instruct Young Robinson in the lore of the forest,

though the storm and the noise of the trees grinding against each other many a time forced them to take refuge in the lee of a windfall in order that they might talk understandingly. Robinson listened, smiled inwardly with pleasure at being at last in intimate relations with one he had always looked up to and said nothing about a chafed heel. But Tad noticed the growing limp, asked two curt questions and then nodded. "It's keep going," he said grimly. "When we get in the skiff the current and the wind will fetch us to the mouth of the river in double quick time and you can rest your foot."

"Isn't there anything that will help it?"

"Nothing."

"It don't hurt much."

"Lying won't help it," was the quiet response and Robinson understood that chafed heels are very painful but not worth making a fuss over. To his credit he accepted the rebuke and was good-natured about it.

They found the boat safely tied under the alders but Tad noted aloud that the river was rising.

"That means a quick trip for us or nobody can get in here with the stuff Doc needs. I'll row and you steer."

"Lemme row."

"You don't know how."

"I want to learn," Young Robinson insisted.

"We're going for medicine for a sick woman, and we aren't out on an instruction trip."

Tad observed that Robinson didn't sulk and nodded to himself. The city boy had something in him.

The miles it had taken them many hours to make up the river slipped by so swiftly that even Tad was surprised when he saw the long green point that marked where they ought to turn into the south slough. Half an hour later they pulled the skiff up to Sijota's landing, stowed the oars and began their windy walk along the dike to the road. On the way Tad remarked, "We'll not stop to eat till we pass Depot Bay."

"It's blowing hard," said Robinson, uneasily. "Do you think the surf will be too high for us to make it around the beach?"

"Time enough to see when we get there," Tad replied. "Save your breath; you will need it."

Two hours thereafter the boys arrived on the pebbly shore of the bay. Young Robinson stared around at its rocky wall, at the trees that seemed to grow on the very edge of the lofty rocks and to swing far out into space before the blast of the wind, at the shallow channels that marked the creek beds and then — in the opening to seaward — not ten yards wide — rose a great white wall of foam which rushed inward, broke thunderously and spread in a boiling flood to the very log they were stand-

ing on. Tad drew his companion hastily back.

"Watch your chance," he said quietly. "These big ones come only every two or three minutes. We must hurry. The wind is keeping the tide from going out far, and pretty soon it will be impossible to get across."

The water circled in the great basin, was sucked slowly back and then vanished, leaving sponges of foam to fly before the eddying wind and spatter among the tree branches.

"Now!" said Tad.

They dropped down on the weedy gravel, made the first channel, splashed through it and were halfway through the next one when with a crash that shook the ground a second breaker struck the opening.

With a swift outstretching of his hand Tad grasped his companion and redoubled his speed for the gash in the timber that marked the road on the other side. Behind them the thundering sea raised its clamour, striking here and there some projecting pinnacle, tearing at the gravel, thumping over the large boulders. And Young Robinson rocked on his limbs, found that terror was sapping his strength and within a hundred feet of safety flung himself sideways, dragging Tad with him to the gravel.

The scout leader jerked himself up and pulled Robinson to his feet. With all his strength he

THE CRITICAL MOMENT

dragged him back into line for the road, thrust one arm about him and then dashed on. Within twenty feet of the road's edge the wave overtook them, picked them up, tossed them towards the branches of an overhanging hemlock and then sucked them back. But in that instant Tad Sheldon knew he had a reprieve. A long root torn from its hold in the ground was lashing about just ahead. By one frantic effort he reached it and grasped it with his free hand. There he clung and held Young Robinson tightly, while the sea washed and eddied and tugged and beat him. Then the terrific suction of the outflow caught him and he set his teeth and prepared for the final moment. If he could maintain his hold on the tree root until the water drained back they were saved. Otherwise —

One thing helped him. So soon as the wild circling of the water ceased and the tense pull of the ebb gained force the root ceased its erratic movement and grew still. Tad's strength held. The gravel grated under his feet. An instant later he dragged his companion up on the muddy road.

Young Robinson was conscious, but in his upward stare Tad, reeling himself and choking, saw that he was past reasoning with, so he ceased telling him to get up and sat down beside him to rest. Seated there in full sight of the maelstrom that had so nearly taken them both, the scout leader learned the great lesson of fear. He was deadly afraid

himself, shaken to the heart by the same terror that had overwhelmed Young Robinson. And when the boy finally sat up and said brokenly, "I guess I made a fool of myself," Sheldon smiled.

Later Robinson wiped his streaming face and stared at a bleeding cut on his wrist. "I — you pulled me out — you —" Shame held his tongue.

Tad waved his hand towards the seething bay, smiled again and said in as steady tones as he could muster, "We better be moving."

Young Robinson got to his feet and looked in perplexity at his companion. Tad was on one knee trying to rise. He tried several times and then fell back, white-faced. "My ankle," he said miserably.

"Sure?"

"Yes. I didn't feel it, either. But it's sure sprained."

Together they examined it and even to Robinson's inexperienced eye it was certain there was serious injury. What to do? The boys looked at each other a moment.

"We promised to get that stuff for doc," Tad muttered.

"It's twenty miles to home," Robinson replied.

"And I can't make it and it's late now and we'd barely time to get there before dark, anyway. But we've got to do that for the doctor," was the re-

sponse. "I wish I had some of my patrol here."

Then Robinson rose to the occasion. "You move on up the hill and we'll build a fire and have a bite to eat. We can talk it over during that."

With great pains Tad Sheldon found himself able to hobble on up the hill a hundred yards where there was good shelter under the roots of a gigantic hemlock. A fire was built, the bacon broiled, coffee made and appetites satisfied. Then the two of them worked carefully at bandaging the injured ankle.

"Now you know first aid for sprains," Tad said when the job was finished. "You will now hunt for some old tin cans, take my knife and cut me some firewood and then go on to Newport and get that stuff for the doctor. Send somebody with it and they can pick me up to-morrow."

Young Robinson stared at the sombre trees, at the alders swaying around a little spring close by, and then listened to the roar of the gale. The twenty miles home, over cliffs, along precipices, along the dangerous beach were horrible in prospect. But in Tad's tones he knew the ring of command; it appealed to him to believe that the scout leader was treating him as one of his own patrol for the time being and — it was his fault that Tad's ankle was useless. Young Robinson swallowed a couple of times and held out his hand

for the paper containing the list of things Dr. Carter must have.

"I'll go and be there to-night," he said. "I — I hate to leave you."

"Don't be an ass," was the testy reply. "I've camped out in worse weather than this."

"But bears — wild cats — and you can't walk," Young Robinson said wretchedly.

"I have my knife, and before you're two miles on your way I'll have a crutch made. If worst comes to worse I can get to Otter Rock and Chatterton's. 'Fact, I may go there to-night. It's only eight miles."

"I'll stop and tell Chatterton," was the relieved answer.

"You will not," Tad said savagely. "The house is a mile from the road and half the time there's nobody there. You'll go right home and get some one to take that stuff to the doctor."

Equipped for the road Young Robinson paused. Ted was already ostentatiously busy over his crutch. "It'll do to fetch firewood, anyway."

"Well," said Robinson awkwardly, "so long!"

"So long!"

The next two miles Robinson was acutely aware that his blistered heel was getting worse at every step. But a glance at the sea raging below him and a knowledge that if he did not reach the long stretch of beach before dark he would never dare the ven-

ture along its perilous miles urged him on and he found that by keeping his mind on his errand or on Tad he made better progress.

He crossed the great hill at Otter Rock and sped down the other slope to the swamp and then the beach. On this he had a good mile before it would be necessary to watch chances to round little promontories, but even here the surf was running far up towards the bluff's foot.

To his dying day Robinson will never forget the landmarks of the next six miles. His searching eyes spied out every crevice or foothold on the face of the rocks. When he had to wait for a racing breaker to retire and knew that if a second one caught him while he was rounding the slippery rocks, he fairly photographed each little feature, every bush that might afford a handhold, every projecting root that one might catch, every jutting spur that one might rest on.

But the darkness overcame him while he was still midway of the dangerous stretch. The darkness, however, was not complete enough to wholly obscure the general masses of rock and cliff, and he managed to recall enough of what he had seen on the previous trip to avoid the worst holes. And at last he reached the rushing creek mouth above which, as he knew, was a summer hotel, now shut up for the season. Here he was stumped. The creek was shifty and deep from the rains, the surf

ran up too far for him to venture crossing lower down and a huge log jam higher up seemed to make progress impossible.

Young Robinson gritted his teeth. He was not going to be turned back only three miles from his goal. He started to climb over the treacherous jam underneath which the water rushed and gurgled and foamed. He knew that a misstep meant being huddled limply under some slippery root, never to be found again. But he kept on, feeling his way over slender spars, creeping along massive logs, always watchful, never letting go one handhold till he had another; and hot in his heart was the sense that he was taking all this care not wholly for himself but also for Old Lady Olsen, lying sick many miles away.

He arrived in town at nine o'clock and proceeded to Dr. Carter's house, where he told his message and left the list. Then he went to the hotel, where he was told the Olsens still were, found them and simply informed them that Dr. Carter was out there and that he had sent in a list of necessaries. He also told them about Tad Sheldon and gained their warm assurance that they would be at his camp before ten in the morning.

"But how did you make it all this way to-day?" they demanded incredulously.

"Walking," said Young Robinson briefly.

"Well," said Old Man Olsen, clearing his throat,

"If it weren't for you boy scouts I'd be drowned. I'd ha' lost my launch, my wife would have perished out there alone and —"

Confronting evident emotion Young Robinson backed away. "I'm not a scout," he said quickly. "I'm not even a tenderfoot, but — I — I'd like to be."

His mother received him tearfully. Everybody had assured her that the boys were safe with Dr. Carter and that Tad Sheldon was a host, but she had been hard to console. Now with her boy safely back, wet through, muddy, bruised, exhausted, she cuddled him and tried to learn all that happened.

"Aw, we just went up there and then Tad and I came back — that is, he came part way and I came all the way because he hurt his foot. He'll be back to-morrow. It was nothing."

And that was the complete relation of his adventures that Young Robinson gave his mother.

The next night, hearing that Tad Sheldon had been brought in by a passing packer, Robinson tried to decide whether he might go and see him. Modesty prevented, but in the morning Tad himself, hobbling on crutches, found him out and nodded gruffly:

"I'm glad you got back," said Robinson shyly.

"Sure," said Tad. "By the way, the patrol meets this afternoon and we might take in a tenderfoot or so. Might come around if you like."

Here strolled up another scout. "Say, Bill," said his leader, "Young Robinson here might join us this afternoon as a tenderfoot. He — he's all right!"

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

TAD SHELDON, leader of the Yaquina Bay patrol of Boy Scouts, and "Kit" Carson, his chum, stood before the big fireplace in their cabin in the bull-pine woods below the old lighthouse and discussed the prospects. It was mid-winter and the Oregon Coast was in the grip of a southerly gale that had raged for two weeks from Cape Flattery to Cape Blanco. Even in its sheltered place in the hollow the deserted house the scouts had appropriated for their own shook and creaked under the furious gusts that tore down over the sand hills, laden with spray and an occasional flying bit of foam.

"Can't go for a hike this weather," Kit remarked.

"No," said Tad, whose father was Number One in the life saving crew. "The crew might be called out any time, and that means we've got to be here to attend to things."

"Seems as if there wasn't much scouting to do winter-time."

Tad nodded. "I guess we'd better just study up the handbook and get ready for anything that

might turn up. Let's have another look at the laws, anyway."

Together they reread the nine laws posted up on the wall. "One and Two everybody knows," said Kit. "And Number Three about helping the injured and doing good turns — no chance of that now."

Tad grew thoughtful. "I've been thinking about Number Four," he remarked. "It says we've got to be friendly to everybody."

"We are," returned Carson, staring out the little window at the bending trees.

"No," his leader replied slowly. "We're not. How about that rotten trick we played Old Hansen over at South Cove?"

"Cut his mooring-lines so's his old scow would drift up on the beach," Kit laughed. "Served the old codger right. Nobody likes him."

"Just what I was thinking," Tad rejoined. "Seems kind of a shame that he never gets a good word from any one."

"Beastly old sour-face."

"It didn't do us any good to cut his lines. Took him a week to haul his house-boat into deep water again."

"Ought to have done *him* good," Kit protested. "What did he mean by always kicking about us fellows going berrying over there? You know he has the only landing on South Beach where we

could tie up at low tide and he untied our boat twice and we had to hunt for it and nearly lost it in the surf last time."

"Everybody teases him," Tad answered. "He didn't know us from Adam. But now that we've got our uniforms I hate to have him say, 'The scouts are always hurting my property.' It doesn't sound right. Besides, there's that law."

"Suppose we've got to obey the law," was the response. "But how're we to be friendly to Old Hansen? He'll get his gun as sure as we ever show up near him again."

"Are you game?"

"Sure."

"I've got a scheme."

"Spit it out."

"We'll go over this afternoon and see Hansen."

"Too stormy, Tad. Why, it's breaking clear over the spit! I'll bet Old Hansen is having a time to keep his scow right side up at her anchorage."

Tad's lips shut firmly. Then he said, "Tell the fellows to be here at one o'clock. We've let that law go without obeying too long already. We'll just drop over on Hansen this afternoon and tell him exactly why we came."

"All right," Kit returned amiably. "I've got to hurry home and get in some dry wood for mother and fill the lamps and fix the lantern. I'll see Tim

Culver and Tommy Foster. Foster can go over and tell Milligan and Spencer. I'll bet Spencer's mother won't let him go this weather."

"Don't ask him," Tad said quickly. "The kid is all right, but he's too small for this kind of expedition, anyway."

Kit pulled on his oilskins and sou'wester and dodged out the door into the rain. Tad went back to the placard of laws and studied it for several minutes with a frown on his face. "It's got to be done," he growled to himself. "The old fellow may get awfully ugly. But we'll be friendly to him just the same."

When the boys assembled at one o'clock Tad glanced over them and said abruptly: "I've been thinking we haven't obeyed the Fourth Law as we should. We've played some rotten tricks on Old Hansen that lives on that scow in South Cove. So we'll take our boat and go over there this afternoon and square up with him."

Foster, the only red-headed one in the crowd, snorted. "Nobody likes him. They say he murdered a man somewhere and that's why he's living over in that place by himself."

"And I heard he swore he'd kill anybody that came near his old scow," Milligan added.

Sheldon shook his head. "All talk. Anyway, it doesn't matter. The law is the law, isn't it?"

"Sure," Milligan replied, tying a cord around

his waist to hold his oilskin coat snugly. "What's your idea, Ted?"

"To go right across now and see him."

"Stiff pull," Spencer remarked.

"Ebb tide," added Culver, who studied the Naval Almanac every day of his life.

"Come on," Tad said briefly and they trooped out and down the steep road that led to the bay beach.

It was indeed a stormy afternoon. The bar was veiled in rain and spray but the big seas were running up the narrow entrance of the bay and creaming along the jagged rocks of the south jetty in a fashion that made Kit Carson shake his head. He said nothing however until they had reached their boat lying under an old Government wharf. The wind was whistling among the beams of this and shaking the structure over their heads. "I say, Tad," he called out to his leader who was already in the boat preparing to lower it down, "we'd better go up around Sand Island!"

Tad nodded. "Yes. It's long pull but we can't cross over against the wind. Come on, fellows!"

Once out in the open the boys found their strength sorely taxed to make head against the tide which was running swiftly between the town shore and the big sands that lay in the middle of the bay. But they kept at work and in three-quarters of an hour rounded the upper head of the

shoals marked by leaping breakers and headed across towards the inlet known as South Cove. Wind and tide helped them greatly and in five minutes more they were in the lee of the high sand dunes that divided that part of the bay from the ocean. Ahead of them a dingy "scow-dwelling" rode uneasily to its moorings, swinging now in one direction and now in another as the wind caught it.

"The old fellow's lines have carried away, I guess," Kit returned, looking over his shoulder.

"He's at work now getting out a new anchor," Tad answered.

"If his old craft gets loose this afternoon he'll find himself on the bar pretty quickly," said Spencer.

The ebb caught their boat again and it was a stiff pull up the narrow channel to within hailing distance of the man at work on the little deck of his scow. He glanced up several times but was too busy to do more than wave a threatening hand.

"Come on, fellows," said Ted. "We've got him where we want him. We'll moor his scow for him. That'll show how we feel."

In spite of a rough shout of warning Ted steered his craft up to the jumping house-boat, made fast to a ring-bolt and leaped out.

The bearded man who was trying to haul in the end of a rope so that he could make it fast to a cavil shook his head and scowled. Tad grinned.

"We've come to help you, Mr. Hansen," he said boldly. "Come on, you fellows, and bear a hand to haul this in."

Promptly the boys swarmed out and an instant later were putting their strength on the rope which slowly came in till there was enough slack to take to the mooring cavil.

"You'll need another line out aft there," Tad remarked. "Else your scow will come broadside on to the wind."

Hansen, a big, bearded man clad in an old flannel shirt and heavy canvas trousers tucked into seaboots, nodded breathlessly.

Tad took that for permission to use his own judgment and under his direction Spencer and Milligan took a big line into the boat and set out to make it fast to a wooden buoy some distance inshore. That done Tad set his men to hauling in on this line and paying out on the other until the scow rode easily to an even pull. As they worked at this Carson called his attention to the seamanlike fashion in which everything had been done by the scow-man.

"Must have been a sailor," Tad explained.

Hansen seemed quite at a loss for words and frowned uneasily on them all. But when the task was done he grumbled, "Thanks. I had my hands full."

"Nothing at all," said Tad. "Glad to do any-

thing to make up for casting your moorings loose that time."

"Was it you?" Hansen demanded.

"Yes. We didn't understand, I guess. We're sorry, Mr. Hansen."

"Hum!"

"We came over to explain that we don't feel that way," Carson put in hastily. "We scouts aren't supposed to do that sort of thing, you know."

Hansen straightened himself up and stared out over the bay. "It's too rough for you boys in that skiff," he grumbled. "You oughtn't to come out in storms."

"Have to," said Tad capably. "Good practise, you know, Mr. Hansen."

For the first time since he had been on the Bay — a long year — the solitary scow-man smiled. "I used to do it myself," he mumbled, reaching for his pipe.

"I thought you must be a sailor," said Spencer.

"Master of my own ship," was the answer.

There seemed to be nothing more to say. Milligan and Foster got into the boat again and Tad slowly unfastened the painter. Suddenly Hansen said, "Guess I don't understand yet. Who sent you over here?"

"Nobody. We came," Tad replied.

"I raised quite a fuss about your throwing off my moorings," the man went on roughly. "Sup-

posed maybe your people told you to come and apologise."

The patrol leader flushed. This was a hard man to deal with. But duty was duty. "We're members of the Boy Scouts," he explained. "And it's against our laws to — to play tricks."

"Then you came yourselves?"

"Sure. Just wanted to show you we didn't mean anything."

Once more the man looked out across the foam-streaked bay. Then he glanced down at the boys. "Better come in and get warm for your start back," he said grudgingly.

They trooped into the little cabin and were surprised to find it neat as a new pin and fixed up with all kinds of home-made comforts. Hansen told them to take off their oilskins and invited them to sit down anywhere they could find seats. "I'll just heat up some tea and get a bite of pickled fish and biscuit," he remarked, going to a locker behind the little stove. "Must be hungry."

Milligan's sharp eyes soon caught sight of a neatly polished sextant in an open case. He pointed to it. "My father has one. He used to be captain of the *Snohomish.*"

Hansen glanced at the instrument as he divided the eatables and then said hesitatingly, "I was master of a big sailing ship."

Something in his weary voice held the boys silent

for a while. When they had eaten heartily Tad said briefly, "We must be getting along. Just call on us if we can ever do anything, Mr. Hansen."

Very awkwardly the man held out his big hand. Each boy shook it bashfully and then they escaped and pushed off from the scow with shouts and shrill cries. Tad boldly steered the skiff directly across the bay as the wind would carry them before it rapidly. Hansen watched them anxiously until they had passed the treacherous spit above the bar. Then he went back into his cabin. No one saw him lay his head down on the home-made table and hide his face in his hands.

That evening Tad and Kit sped through the woods to their scout headquarters and started a small fire before which they dried themselves and discussed the day's events.

"I wonder why Old Hansen quit the sea," Kit remarked presently. "Maybe he lost his ship."

"That was what I was thinking," was the response. "He's awfully sore about something, anyway. Looks as if he came here to kind of hide away from people."

"It's hard luck to lose a ship."

"Worst there is."

"Hard to get another one."

Tad nodded. They had been brought up in households where wrecks and disasters and the tales of broken skippers were daily conversation. None

knew better than they that to lose one's ship is the worst that can befall a seaman. "The captain of the *Mabel H.* killed himself," he murmured.

"And the captain of the *Titanic* wouldn't be saved," Kit added softly.

But the secret of Hansen's life remained a mystery till a month later when red-headed Bob Spencer found himself near the scow-dwelling after a dull afternoon's clamming on South Beach. He would have to wait for the mail-launch to take him home and he ventured to call on Mr. Hansen. He was received hospitably and found himself quite at home with the man he had always formerly feared and hated. They talked of various matters till Bob finally asked permission to examine the sextant.

Mr. Hansen explained its workings to him carefully.

"Some day I'm going to study navigation," the boy told him. "I'm working on my algebra now. And we fellows have some charts, too."

"Good! But when you've learned all you can remember you've still got more to learn. All the books in the world won't save your ship unless you can learn more in a tight pinch."

Spencer was silent, respecting what was evidently a confidence. But the big sailor seemed to wish to say more and Bob listened. It was the short tale of a big sailing vessel ashore on an uncharted reef and a total loss. At its conclusion Spencer nodded.

"I see. If there'd been a tug anywhere near you could have pulled her off."

"It was two thousand miles to the nearest tug," was the grim reply.

Bob rubbed the shining brass of the sextant reflectively. "Why don't you get another ship, Captain Hansen?"

The title brought a flush to the man's cheeks. "They don't give ships to men that have lost one already," he said quietly.

"Then you won't go to sea any more?"

Hansen laughed bitterly. "No, son, I guess not.— Unless I find a ship floating around loose somewhere!"

They both laughed, Spencer much relieved at this less serious view of the matter, and the boy departed for the launch landing.

Now most boys would have promptly retailed so choice a bit of gossip all over the Bay. The explanation of why Hansen lived in solitude on a scow-dwelling would be eagerly listened to by everybody. But Bob thought the matter over on his way home and decided that silence was best. His reasoning was simple: "We fellows are the only friends he's got. He told me because he knew I was a friend. It wouldn't be fair to tattle. People don't make much of skippers that have lost their ships."

So he confided only in Tad and Kit one after-

noon in the headquarters. They listened and agreed with him that the less said the better. "If he finds we know and don't tell," Tad said wisely, "then he'll be sure we're his friends."

"I wish we could get him a ship," said Kit dolefully. "Here we're friends of his and can't do a thing!"

"We'll keep our eyes open," Tad replied. "Maybe something'll turn up."

Nothing did turn up for many a long week. Storms came and went, the life-saving crew patrolled the beaches or went on their hazardous trips to aid the perishing. But often as the boys called upon Hansen they could say nothing to him but curt words of cheerful gossip. Unwittingly, however, they did the solitary man a benefit: from being considered a miserly curmudgeon the people of the Bay grew to show a friendly face towards him. The fact that the scouts accepted him as a decent person and worthy of their association made the elders imagine that they had never really felt anything but the friendliest feelings themselves — a way older folks have of forgetting that they ever spoke ill of a man they learn to like.

But Bob Spencer, who considered the scow-man in a manner his own property, thought long and deeply about him. Plan after plan of getting this unlucky captain once more to sea was thought over, pondered and rejected as vain. But he gradually

came to think that in due time a chance *would* come to show himself and his patrol genuine friends, so strong is the effect of incessant scheming towards an object. And the opportunity at last did come, in a form that none but so earnest a friend as young Spencer would ever have recognised as *the* chance.

It was a blowy morning in early March when Tad Sheldon tramped into headquarters and announced that the crew was just back from a trip off the Siletz river — thirty miles north — and that they had brought back the officers and crew of the water-logged steam-schooner *Evelyn Blue*.

"The old packet sailed from Gray's Harbour for San Pedro three days ago," he related. "They struck bad weather right away and the cargo of lumber swelled and she leaked and the fires were put out and they were afraid she'd turn turtle with 'em. Dad says they managed to anchor her on the outer reef just above Cape Foulweather but they took the crew off because it may blow up hard any minute and then she'll go ashore and break up."

"Like the *Tam O'Shanter*," Milligan commented.

"Only some ship may come along and salvage this one," Tad went on. "They could easy tow her up to the Columbia river. She's abandoned and anybody can have her. Might be worth several thousand dollars for salvage."

Bob Spencer listened, asked a few questions and

then said, "Guess I'll mosey along. Got to see somebody."

"All right," said Tad. "Maybe we'll take a hike up the beach this afternoon and have a look at the wreckage that's coming ashore."

"I'll be back," Spencer said and vanished.

An hour later he appeared on the after deck of Hansen's scow and addressed that worthy through the open window, "I say, captain! now's your chance!"

Hansen took his big hands out of his dishpan, dried them, and came out. "Chance for what, Bob?"

"To get a ship again. I just heard about it."

All the man's passionate desire seemed to flood into his eyes; then he smiled harshly. "Go on! What are you talking about? Don't make fun of me."

"I ain't, honest! The *Evelyn Blue* is abandoned just above the cape, the life savers just brought down the crew off her. She's water-logged and nobody on her."

Hansen cast a quick eye at the clouds and then looked down at Bob.

"Go on," he said huskily.

"She left Gray's Harbour with lumber and sprung a leak and they left her. She's anchored now on the outer reef. Say, can't you go up and get her?"

There was a long silence during which Spencer stood with compressed lips. Here was the chance. Was Hansen going to turn it down? His relief was immense when the man quietly reached for his jacket and said, "Just cast loose the skiff, will you, son? I'll get the oars. They're inside."

On the way across the breezy bay Hansen asked more questions and Bob answered them to the best of his ability. As they landed and made the skiff fast at the town landing Hansen said gravely, "There's one thing I can do, Bob. I can go up the Coast and get *on* that vessel. Then if any other steamer comes along, or a tug, I can tell 'em they've got to bargain with me. That's the law."

"Can't you get on her and sail her in here, right into the bay?"

"Single-handed?" muttered Hansen. He cast a searching look at the sky. "If this Nor'wester would hold twenty-four hours I'd *try* it!"

"We'll help you!"

Hansen shook his head. "Too risky for you fellows. But I'll try it."

"Anyway, we'll go along with you up the coast," Spencer insisted. "You go over the hill and I'll tell the fellows and we'll catch up with you near Jumpoff Joe." He raced away without waiting for an answer.

Tad listened to Spencer's account of what he had done and what Hansen intended to do and said noth-

ing for some little time. Then he told Spencer to call Milligan and Kit from home and tell them to meet at headquarters. "We'll just take our big rope along," he explained. "The sooner we start the better, for it's a good seven miles we've got to go."

They overtook Captain Hansen only at the foot of the road leading across the cape. Tad explained that they were coming along to do what they could to help, though he plainly intimated that he considered the venture hopeless. "The surf isn't high," he conceded. "But how are you going to get out to the wreck? There's no boat, even if we could launch it."

Hansen laid a heavy hand on the boy's shoulder. "Tad, I've been waiting years for just such a chance. Trust me to get out on that vessel if she's still there."

"We'll soon see," was the reply. "Just as soon as we get over this hill we can see twenty miles up the coast."

Fifteen minutes later Hansen held his binoculars to his eyes and stared a long time at the wreck that lay about three miles away and just outside the last line of breakers. When he handed the glasses to Tad he sighed. "Both anchors over," he muttered. "She'll hold unless it blows. And not a craft in sight! I guess this is my chance."

Another hour sufficed to bring them directly op-

posite the *Evelyn Blue*. As she rode with her stern inshore they could see that she was almost awash amidships. But her masts still stood and the forecastlehead was above water. Between the wreck and where they stood lay a good half mile of tumbled sea with here and there a strong pinnacle of black rock projecting. Tad shook his head. "Too bad," he grumbled. "No boat!"

But Hansen was quietly taking off his jacket and boots and looking earnestly at a large bottle which Spencer held in one hand. The boys understood that words were needless. Hansen was going to try to swim out to the wreck. The chances were against him. It was a risk so great that any other man would have laughed at even the suggestion of such foolhardiness. But from Tad down the boys said nothing. Spencer, indeed, felt a burden of guilt on his conscience; it was he who had made plain to this captain without a ship that a ship was waiting for him. Now he knew that in accepting the chance he had offered, Hansen would probably perish. But there was nothing to say. He poured the oil in the bottle as steadily as he could over Hansen's huge arm and shoulders.

When he was ready Hansen picked up his binoculars and handed them to Tad. "If I make the vessel I'll signal to you."

"Wigwag?"

"Yes."

There was a pause. Then Tad held out his hand. Hansen shook it briefly. "You boys have been very friendly," he murmured. "I'm much obliged."

He waded in till the receding wave was up to his waist, dived under the next one and the boys watched him as he was swept out by the tide. When he came up outside the last breaker Tad nodded. "He can swim!"

They scrambled back and up the bluff so that they could continue to keep the swimmer in sight. But when they saw that some unexpected current was steadily carrying him south Tad shook his head. "He ought to have gone in a quarter of a mile north."

"He'll never make it," said Carson quietly and turned his eyes away. As their hopes for the man's success grew fainter boy after boy uneasily went aside to pick up pebbles or kick miserably at drift-logs. Spencer alone refused to take his eyes off his friend. When Tad finally laid the glasses down he promptly picked them up and resumed his gaze.

"Too bad," Tad muttered wretchedly.

Spencer made no answer. He saw the slow, powerful heaving of Hansen's shoulders as plainly as if he had been with him. He caught the quick twist of the head with which he met the combing surges. Hansen had detected the set of the current and was quartering towards the wreck, but

without making any progress so far as Spencer could see. But he kept his eyes to the binoculars.

Suddenly he observed that the gap between the hulk and the swimmer had diminished. It was lessening fast. He could see Hansen stretching himself out in that fast, muscle-tearing stroke used only for short spurts by strong swimmers. Could he maintain that terrific pace? Spencer nodded to himself. Then his eyes blurred and he let the glasses fall. Hansen had disappeared.

He was roused by a shout from Tad who was on the bluff again. "Bring the glasses! He's signalling from the wreck!"

The boys huddled together while Tad adjusted the lenses and focussed them on the almost indistinguishable figure that surmounted the after house of the *Evelyn Blue*. Then he spelled out the letters slowly:

"W-i-l-l t-r-y t-o s-a-i-l i-n, a-l-l r-i-g-h-t."

"Well," said Tad. "He's there and he seems to know what to do. Now we've got to get busy."

"What doing?" came the chorus.

"There's only one thing he can do," Tad explained. "He can't get those two anchors up by himself. He'll have to cut the cables. The current will take him south all right, but he'll have to set some sail to clear the cape. It's just the last of the ebb now and the flood will run till late to-night. It'll be midnight before he'll dare cut loose, for if

he cuts loose on the flood the current will be running north, and inshore as well, and he'll hit the rocks. The old packet is so deep she won't sail worth a hang, so he'll do well if he gets around the cape by morning. So we'll go home and then at daylight we'll fetch across the bar in our boat, get aboard with him and help him bring her in. Now for home, fellows."

"No need of telling everybody," growled Spencer.

"No," Tad assented quickly. "They'd just talk and if he — if —"

"He won't!"

"Well, if he does," Tad went on briefly, "then's time enough to tell the crew and get him off."

Carson snorted. "If that wreck drifts ashore north of the cape there won't be any one to take off. You know that."

They all did, and said no more. But when they reached town Tad was strict in his injunctions that they should all be on hand at six o'clock in the morning. "Tell your folks it's very important," he ordered. "If you have to tell, tell 'em, but don't blab it all over town."

It was just dawn when the patrol reached Jumpoff Joe on the way back to the cape and a steady breeze was lifting the fog gently. They waited on the bluff to see whether their hopes were justified. An hour passed and still they could see nothing.

"The sea is smooth enough," Carson remarked. "Just an easy swell on and the wind is fair for him."

"Maybe he went ashore last night on the other side of the cape?" suggested Milligan.

Spencer looked at him savagely. "Shut up!"

"All right," said Milligan amiably. "We'll see in a little while."

When the fog finally cleared the boys strained their eyes. At first they saw nothing, except a long black something that sluggishly rose and fell on the waves a couple of miles out.

"Turned turtle!" groaned Tad, voicing their fears.

But Spencer had caught a glimpse of another object, far to the south of the Cape and almost opposite the mouth of the river. He pointed it out excitedly. Tad brought the glasses to bear.

"That's it," he announced. "Right side up. Headed in toward the river. Foresail set."

"He'll never make it," Carson said firmly. "First place, the current always sets south from the river. To get to the bar he'd have to beat up. Can't do it with only that much sail, specially as she's so deep in the water."

"One thing for us to do," Tad interposed quickly. "He's not three miles out. We'll hike for our boat and go out and help him."

The boys had seldom ventured across the dangerous bar but this time they did not notice its perils. Their minds were fixed on the wreck rolling outside the whistling buoy with their friend on it. So they pulled lustily and once outside set their little sail and made fast time. Just one hour after they left the last channel buoy Tad swung his little craft up to leeward of the huge bulk of the steam schooner and yelled loudly.

Hansen stared down at them, heaving line in hand. He said nothing but cast the weight. When the boat drew up alongside he leaned over the low rail and said hoarsely, "Say, pull off. I guess this old packet will turn bottomside up before long. She's nearly done it twice already."

"Then we're just in time to take you off," said Tad. "Come on and leave her."

Hansen caught Spencer's gloomy expression and shook his head. "Not me," he growled. "This is my ship. I won't quit her."

They argued the question a moment and then Tad made the line fast and caught a rope's end that hung over the side. "If you stay we'll all stay," he said curtly. "We'll get her inside in a couple of hours if she'll stay right side up."

Hansen made a last attempt to persuade them to leave him. Then he submitted. The change in his manner was marvellous. "If you fellows insist on

staying," he said grimly, "it's my business to see that this ship doesn't drown you all. Come on, now, and get to work!"

The *Evelyn Blue* was a fairly large vessel, with an immense foredeck which was piled high with lumber. It was apparent that the crew had endeavoured to relieve the strain on their disabled craft by jettisoning this part of the cargo, but had given it up. Now the waves gurgled through the great piles of boards and made strange, ghastly sounds that by no means reassured Tad and his mates. Hansen paid no attention to their hesitant glances but curtly set them to work hoisting the mainsail which was still furled on the boom that lay along the cabin roof.

When this was hoisted with some difficulty the captain gave the wheel to Carson and Milligan and informed Tad that there was still another and harder task ahead for them. "There's a spare anchor lashed on the fo'c's'le head. I had to chop the cables away. We've got to bend a big manila hawser to that anchor and get it ready to let go."

So busy were the boys over this task that they did not observe that their ship was slowly heading in towards the bar until Carson hailed the captain and shouted that they were getting in too close. Hansen glanced around and smiled on his weary helpers.

"The bar is smooth and will be smoother as the

tide floods," he said. "But we've got to anchor because this craft draws a good twenty-five feet now, being so deep, and so we'll just stay outside. You boys can row in and dicker for me with a couple of launchmen."

Tad dropped the marlinspike he was handling and looked across the bar thoughtfully. "There's a nine foot tide at two o'clock," he told Hansen. "That'll give twenty-six feet clear in the south channel."

The captain shook his head. "I don't know this bar," he answered. "We'll get some one that does."

"Carson and I both know it," Tad ventured. "If you could handle her we can pilot you in."

"And it's going to blow again," Spencer interposed, sniffing the air.

"I know *that*," was the grim reply. "It'll be a gale before nightfall."

As if to give point to this prophecy the *Evelyn Blue* rose slowly on a huge swell and dived until the water brimmed over the fo'c's'le head. Hansen grasped the boys in his enormous embrace and held them while the brine drained away.

"That's the first of the storm," he said curtly. "Watch her break on the bar!"

The swell travelled on, a dull, blackish hill of water. It lifted the whistling buoy, sped on and then seemed to mount upwards till it hid all view

of the river's mouth. Then it whitened and the thunder of its breaking reached their listening ears.

"That settles it," Hansen growled. "You boys can't get in again in your skiff and we can't stay out here. We'll just hoist our ensign down and the life saving crew will come for you."

Tad shook his head, determinedly. "The flood is making in fast, sir. We'll be on the bar before they can reach us. We've got to chance it, sir!"

Hansen nodded and told them to follow him back to the after deck across the lumber. "Too late for the anchor," he said. "Now we'll see what we can do in the way of sailing in."

Tad called Carson from the wheel, his place being taken by Spencer.

"Look here, Kit," he said quickly. "You and I have got to pilot her in."

"Only half-tide yet."

"Only twenty-three feet and the skipper says she draws twenty-five!"

Kit nodded. "And she doesn't steer at all, hardly."

"We've got to make it," Tad said decidedly. "We're pretty near to the whistler already and the tide will fetch us along good."

"Know that old channel north of the gridiron?"

Tad shook his head. "Dangerous. Even Captain Tyler never uses it now."

"Only chance," Kit insisted.

The boys looked at each other. A second big swell rolled the wreck far over and then dropped her almost broadside on in the hollow. It broke not a quarter of a mile ahead of them.

"North channel it is," Tad muttered. "You pilot her and I'll heave the lead and keep a look-out overside."

Hansen had watched them keenly. Now he smiled when he saw Ted pick up the hand-lead and climb into the little cage on the port side to cast it. He listened to Carson's short explanation of their course and took the wheel himself, telling the other boys to stand by the mainsheet. He had already hoisted the distress signal, but every one was too busy to see whether the crew had responded as yet.

For five minutes the unwieldy schooner wallowed along towards the outer buoy. Tad's voice repeated in a shrill cry the depths he got. The bar lay once more quiet. Behind them the swells rose with steadily growing might.

At last Tad threw up his hand and Carson said quietly, "Keep her right for the inside of the north jetty, sir. If we can cross this shallow ground all right, we'll be in the channel pretty soon."

Hansen strained at the wheel, calling over his shoulder to the boys to haul in the mainsheet. The *Evelyn Blue* started to swing slowly, hung a moment, and then rose on a toppling crest to sink down and down till a terrific thump told them she

had struck. By good fortune the impulse of the immediately succeeding wave pushed her over this and left her slowly rolling in broken water while Tad leaped up and down and shouted, "We're in the channel!"

But the schooner was helpless at last. The tide swirling through the narrow pass carried her bodily in on another shoal, a wave swept completely over her and left her careened with both sails torn away and the deck cargo spilled out of its lashings. Hansen dropped the useless wheel and yelled to the boys to climb into the rigging. They were all safe and obeyed him instantly. Milligan yelled down that the crew were on their way to their rescue.

The wreck then lay almost in the middle of the river-mouth, deep water on both sides. Hansen stared over the side an instant and then looked seaward. Spencer, who clung to the shrouds just over his head, saw the grim expression on the defeated skipper's face. Without looking behind him he knew that a second sea was coming. He closed his eyes.

Hansen watched the approaching wave without moving a muscle, his feet far apart to give him a hold on the sloping deck. As the threatening crest mounted upward he seemed fascinated by the sight and gave no heed to Carson's cries for him to save himself. After what seemed an endless period of time the huge surge rose directly over the stern

"THEY ALL SAW A TREMENDOUS SEA HASTING IN TOWARD THEM."

of the wreck. Hansen grasped the wheel for his last hand hold. To his amazement the crest did not break. The bulk rose, instead, righted violently, and then seemed to leap forward before the terrific impetus of the surge. Ten seconds later the boys looked down into the upturned faces of the life savers whose boat rode easily in the smooth water. The *Evelyn Blue* was inside, floating up with the tide, the lumber of her deck cargo slowly dropping from her smashed bulwarks to strew the bay.

The captain of the life savers looked over the wreck and then said, "Luck! Never saw such luck!"

Hansen stared down at him. "Luck? Maybe. But it looks to me more as though it was grit. It was these boys that did it."

When the steam schooner was at last at anchor off the sands Hansen shook hands with the scouts. "You've got me back a ship," he said simply.

"It was fun," Tad muttered.

"If that's your notion of fun, you'll lead a sad life," was the response. "You lost your skiff. It was torn away when we struck first. I'll get you another one."

Tad pointed to the street lined with the curious. "Say, we can never go ashore with all those folks. They'll be asking all kinds of questions."

Hansen fixed his eyes on the crowd and nodded.

"Your folks might be anxious. Better go and tell them you're all right. See you this afternoon. Take that skiff up-ended on the wheel-house."

During that evening Captain Hansen made the rounds of the various homes in full dress. At each place he painfully explained that he felt it his duty to state that if it had not been for the scouts he would have failed not only of salvaging the wreck but of saving his own life. The last place he called was at Spencer's. Having explained to Mr. and Mrs. Spencer in the same fashion he had at the other houses he asked to see Bob alone.

When they were by themselves Hansen said gruffly, "I guess you're the best friend I've got. If it hadn't been for you I'd never had my chance at another ship."

Bob squirmed uneasily. "It was only what we had to do, sir."

The captain nodded. "You never thought when you started out just to be friendly that you'd end up by this. Doing things one ought to do is easy enough to start on. But you boys kept it up. I'm going to leave here as soon as I get the salvage fixed up and buy a ship of my own. So I just thought maybe you would like my scow-house. I'll leave it just as it is. Maybe you boys could use it for something."

"We can't," Bob said longingly. "You know

that would be getting pay and we aren't allowed to do that."

Hansen was thoughtful a moment. "Anything in your laws about taking something from a friend?"

"No—o, we're supposed to be friendly with everybody, you know."

"Then," was the triumphant response, "as your friend I give you my house. You've been good friends to a lonely man. As a friend going away I just hand you over the key."

"I suppose —" Spencer began doubtfully yet eagerly.

"It's settled, then," said the captain, holding out his hand.

When the *Evelyn Blue* had been repaired and refitted and was gone on her voyage, and Captain Hansen had departed to buy him a ship the boys assembled in his house-boat, snuggest of places. But they were unusually solemn in spite of their new acquisition. "It'll make a good place all right," Tad remarked dully. "Kind of lonely, though."

Spencer nodded. "I'd rather Captain Hansen had it," he said miserably. "He was — he was—"

"Who'd ever have thought he'd make such a bully friend?" said Carson.

WHEN THE RIVERS RAN WHITE

TIM CULVER had studied the barometer for a week and announced to the boys that Spring had come.

"It's only the middle of February" said Young Robinson. "Spring doesn't come that early."

"No big tides for three weeks," Tad Sheldon remarked. "Never knew it to fail that the big tides always came before the last Winter storms, Tim."

Culver was obstinate. "I've kept a log of the weather and Wild Bill told me he saw a bear last Monday over on Cold Creek. Bears don't come out till Spring's here."

Tad grinned. "Going for that famous hike of yours you've been talking so much about?"

Culver nodded. "Yep. Guess I'll get away to-morrow morning. I'm all ready except I want my boots to soak another night in oil. I'll bet I make the whole hundred miles in three days."

Tad pointed to a county map on the wall of their cabin-headquarters. "Just mark out the way you're going," he suggested.

"To the Agency across by the Ellsworth Trail

then down to Canoe Landing, across by Butterfield's, down by Kiota Rock and to the mouth of the Siletz; that's seventy miles and from there home is another thirty."

"Can't do it," said Tad.

"Well," Tim responded amiably, "I can try it, anyway."

"That's some hike," Young Robinson remarked thoughtfully. "And if you get caught in a storm —"

"I tell you," retorted Tim, "there won't be any storm. You know the wind always gets into the East for a couple or three days, then hauls into the southeast before it even rains. The wind's northwest and the glass high."

"All right," said Robinson. "Ain't discouraging you." He looked at the map again. "How're you going to get from Canoe Landing to Butterfield's? The trail crosses the river several places and that's no river to monkey with."

"Don't know. Just going to try it, that's all."

"Stick a few blazes along as you go," said Tad. "'Member and don't mix people up who've already blazed along there. Jim Robertson was telling father one day he got lost looking for Lee Williams' three-blaze mark below Otter Rock and somebody else had blazed the same mark another place and Jim was two days getting back."

"Lots of tenderfeet mark blazes, too."

"Wild Bill says never change the brand on a horse or the blaze on a tree."

"I'll trade my knife for yours, Bob," Tim said to Spencer. "Mine's all right for hunting but it's not heavy enough in the back for rough work. We can trade back."

"No fair," Tad interposed. "This isn't necessary work. Use your own knife. You'll maybe know more about 'em when you're back."

Tim agreed, carefully writing up on a big log-sheet on the wall opposite his name. *Left for Indian Agency 6 a. m.*

"That'll give me time to reach the beginning of the trail just at daylight."

When he was gone after gruff farewells Tad watched him pass down the trail towards the bay till he disappeared and then turned round to say to Kit Carson, "Bet it blows before to-morrow night."

"Then he can stop at the Agency and take the stage to Toledo and the launch back home."

"If he isn't back in four days somebody's got to hunt for him. Lem Butterfield knows that Siletz country all his life and he says he'd rather face a cougar than that river when it's in freshet. Tim's never been over the lower trails."

They were silent a moment. They had been brought up on the edge of the world and none knew better than either that nothing must be done or said

to infer that their comrade couldn't take care of himself. He was going out after credit. He should have it. Yet he should also know, if worst came to the worst, that they were his friends and mates. Tad put it briefly, "Shut up on all this. Tim'll make it — in spite of his barometer. Anyway, time enough to josh him if it *does* storm."

Tim came to a realization that the most valuable instrument may not always be trusted at noon the next day when he backed up against a low stump and allowed his thirty-pound pack to slip from his shoulders. He was twelve miles on his way to the Indian Agency. He had ten to go through the forest before he reached the river. He must cross that before dark or camp. Overhead the far crests of the enormous firs were rustling in a breeze that scurried and flawed — a sure sign that the steady, booming Nor'wester was dying. When the Nor'wester ceases then the Oregon coast becomes a place where men grow silent.

To Tim his situation was serious only in that he wished to carry out his plans without changing them. There were half-a-dozen Indian houses within a few miles where he might take refuge. The stage ran from the Agency to Toledo three times a week.

Within the next few hours he must make his decision either to give up his hike or push on.

It was four o'clock when he finally came out of

the forest into a long stretch of the light-barked chittam-wood. He knew that he could not reach the river before dark. To attempt the ford without first testing it by well-known marks would be madness. The old ferryman never attempted the passage after dusk. Yet the sky did not seem to presage an immediate storm. True, the wind had got into the East. But it might stay in that quarter for several days before the gale came. There would still be time in the morning to make a final decision.

Tim made his camp in the lee of a big stack of chittam-wood bark, used some of the soft, shredded fibers for his bedding and cooked supper. For some time he sat watching his dying fire and its reflections on the glassy leaves above him. When the last coals were almost gone he raked them into a shallow hole, got his pitchwood close at hand and turned in.

He was wakened by that slow, throbbing call which ends in the scream of the cougar. It came from deep in the forest. Tim listened and nodded to himself. No need to be afraid of that beast. They were only dangerous when famine drove them down into the clearings. Half an hour later he roused up and looked at his watch. It was three in the morning. Far below him he heard the roar of the river. Then he tried to remember whether he had heard that noise before he went to sleep.

He could not, and knew that he should have to wait till he reached the ford before he could be sure that it was not rising.

"It comes up ten feet in an hour, they say," he thought.

He could see no stars and the wind seemed to have died down entirely, so he lit his fire, cooked his bacon and mush and having carefully extinguished every spark decided that he try a little walking in the darkness. He was soon back in the trail and then saw that there was a dim, hazy whiteness that made the trees fairly visible. He set on his way carefully, stopping many times to get his directions and assure himself that he had not stepped off his winding trail into the soft bark that felt to his feet exactly like the soft earth and leaves he knew marked the right road.

In the glimmering of a windy dawn he reached the top of the hill that gave down to the river. It was so steep and rocky that he took it very carefully and finally reached a creek he knew must be Rocky River just as the sun lit up for a moment the heavy, hanging clouds. That illumination faded almost immediately and he saw that the storm was coming. While the air was motionless in the valley it was already blowing stiffly above the mountain. And Rocky River was discoloured and foamy. It had rained in the upper mountains and the streams were rising.

He reached the ford an hour later and found a little group of Indians patiently waiting for the ferryman who, they said, had responded from the hill to their summons.

Tim was acquainted with but one of these men. To him he addressed a question.

The Indian nodded and pointed to an alder tree trailing its head in the swift rapids a hundred yards below where they stood. "When that tree isn't on dry land, nobody can ford."

While the crazy scow called a ferry was following its cable across the stream the ferryman said sourly, "Any of you people that want to get back to-day have got to be right here before noon. I won't cross any more with the old river piling up this way."

The Indians nodded and Tim felt uncomfortably sure that there was little chance of his finishing the trip.

"When does the next stage go for Toledo?" he asked at the other landing.

"T'morrow," said the ferryman, "*if* it goes at all.

The rest had gone on so Tim tramped along through the smooth meadow that spread out before the agency buildings, trying to decide what he should do. His rough copy of the map told him that the Siletz made a great bend around the agency grounds with an arc of almost nine miles. The

meadow he was crossing would land him on a road from which it was but a mile to the lower end of this bend. On that road he must determine his course, for he must do one of three things: proceed a mile to the agency and stay there till the next day; go back on the ferry and tramp back to the Bay or turn off on the road to Canoe Landing and thence make his way forty miles down the river.

He stared up at the low, threatening sky, saw the great torn streamers of cloud on the great black heights of Eagle Mountain, heard the growing moan of the wind and then stopped. The time had come to decide. To his left was the way he had planned; to his right ran the road to the agency.

Tim grinned and turned to the left.

Half an hour brought him to the long, sullen stretch of river that marks the head of navigation on the Siletz. At its upper end the white water ran smoothly out around a narrow bend. At its lower the high mountains closed in on it.

"Which way, stranger?"

A heavily booted man with a tremendous pack on his back called to Tim from a shed almost at the river brink. The boy saw that he carried a paddle in one hand.

"Down the river," Tim replied.

The man stared curiously. "Scouting?"

"Nope. Just out for a hike."

"Live down the river?"

"Live over Yaquina Bay way."

The man lifted his heavy felt hat and scowled. "Never been here before?"

"No," Tim answered. "I'm going down the river to the mouth of the Siletz and then down the Coast and home."

"You're a big fool for a small fellow. Don't you know that there's a storm coming? And this river 'll be mighty high by to-morrow morning, son."

"I'm going to walk it."

"You can't. What trail there is is only Indian and trapper and it crosses the river a dozen times. There aren't five places to stop over night in forty miles, if you could get to 'em. Don't try it."

"Got to," said Tim stubbornly. "Which way does the trail run from here?"

"They don't teach you youngsters to take advice, do they. Well, I've lived only six years in the Siletz and I take advice so quick it makes my head swim. I tell you you can't make this trip this weather. Hard enough in good times."

Tim nodded. "Don't want to go, but I started out and anyway, it's too late to turn back."

The stranger seemed to understand this. He smiled suddenly. "I'll just fetch you over myself. I'm going four miles on your way. You'll be a much wiser boy if you get through this. What ever put it into your head?"

Tim explained. "A fellow ought to find out while he doesn't have to the things he's *got* to know sometimes," he ended.

"Just climb into that dug-out," said the man.

When Tim had settled himself and reached the pack out of his new friend's hand and dropped it skilfully into the narrow bottom of the canoe there was a grunt of approval.

"See you know how to get into this kind of craft."

"Had to learn that," Tim remarked.

They thrust out into the channel and their really cranky canoe rolled a few times. The man steadied it easily and shook his head. "River's running on the bottom, son. Know what that means?"

"No."

"It means that when the river is just going its usual gait it doesn't drag and run over all the rocks and dips and into the hollows of the river-bed. That water kind of hangs to the bottom. When it doesn't then you get these humps on the surface and that tells you Mister River is worried about itself. Look out there!"

Tim glanced across the smooth, apparently motionless current. He saw a long hump raise itself, spurt a tiny bit of foam and slip back into the water."

"Seal-otter?"

"No. Just water that came up from the bot-

tom." The man grew thoughtful. "It tips you over before the quickest hand and eye can catch you and then —"

Tim waited.

"Then you go down with it, like my brother did."

Tim said nothing but when he saw another long, low hump in the river he wondered if the man noticed it. He felt that this friend did not like to see what had taken his brother down. He did not point it. Then he realised that the canoe-man was too wise to allow anything to escape him, no matter how little he liked to see it, for he said:

"Son, always keep to this side of the stream when the river's growling. It's dead smooth silt bottom and they don't rise like that one just did except when there's an eddy here and they are thrown across it."

The mountains were closing down over them, it seemed to Tim, and he noticed that his companion was apparently watching for something ahead. Suddenly the whole canoe seemed to have been lifted bodily across the narrowing stream. It rocked almost under down-hanging alders, skirted a huge hemlock that lay shaking in white water as if it expected its remaining roots to break any moment and allow it to leave the spot it had known for three hundred years.

"Son, that's a bad eddy and I always let it take me across itself. Never buck an eddy."

"Have to to come up, don't you?"

"No. Just take it like you would a log you wanted to jump over."

Tim noticed that in the huge dark gorge they were now traversing the water ran with a mellow, steady current unbroken anywhere. But it ran swiftly, as if there was an enormous weight driving it along.

"We land right below here," the man murmured. "Be ready to catch the alders. The channel is two hundred feet deep here and if our gear gets overboard we shan't be able to fish it out now!"

Tim caught a long branch and the canoe swung gently round and the man quickly stepped out and hauled its nose up. When they had removed the packs they dragged the dug-out up into the alders and the man threw the long painter rope over a high branch and tied it. "River may rise twenty feet," he explained. "That's so I can get my canoe any time. I've had to swim and wade to it before now."

"Do you live on the river?"

"Little Drift Creek," was the response. "Your trail to Butterfield's goes that way. You'll have company for four miles. My place is a mile off the main trail."

They set out through the alders till they reached

a rather wide but rarely used road which in any other country would have been thought impassable for animals. Tim noticed that it was deeply indented with oxen tracks and the logs that lay across it had been merely chopped away on the top to allow for passage.

"This'll take you eight miles," his guide told him. "Then you come to an old cabin that nobody's lived in for five years — fellow was drowned and his wife went outside. That's where the mail-carrier crosses to catch the trail on the other side to Butterfield's."

They ate their noon lunch under an enormous spruce, which was so marked with blazes that Tim, after long study of them, asked the meaning. "Corner of the township," was the reply.

"Are these the four compass directions?" Tim asked, pointing to some deep marks, one on each of the four sides.

"Yes, true directions. Best to know the variation when you're using your own compass with these as a beginning of your line. But just for trail use they'll serve."

Before they had put out the fire Tim knew that his friend's name was Ecker, that he had a wife and child, and that if Tim would do so, he was welcome to stop until after the storm which was now roaring in the forest tree tops in great surges of sound.

"My trail's just a mile on, but it usually takes

me an hour," Ecker explained. "Three blazes on the north side step-wise. North side is right side going to my place, left hand coming. Always blaze by compass direction so you can leave it to the other fellow to decide whether you said right or left hand. Can't remember two directions as easy as one. Well, let's trail on."

They reached Ecker's "corner" and he put down his pack. "You can easy make it to that deserted place by four o'clock. Better come with me. But we'll see what the river says, son." He pulled line and hook out of his pocket and cut a short pole. Together they slipped down a path to the bank of a stream which emptied into the river a few yards below them. Ecker baited the hook with some salmon eggs which he had extracted from a small tin can and threw the bait into a pool.

Five minutes later Ecker put up his line and shook his head. "River says it's going to be bad."

"Because the trout don't bite? I saw a big one. Let me try."

"No. Let me tell you something more, Tim: when the fish don't bite on salmon eggs that means they feel the river is getting ugly. Just like you feel when you see a storm coming. The storm is just as bad for them down below as it is for us, for it roils the water, cleans out their hiding places and strips their feeding places. Then there's always drift to tear them out from under the rocks,

And there's always the eddy to fetch them into a place they never saw and where they die when the water goes down again."

"What do they do?"

"I don't know. All I know is they won't bite before a heavy rise in the stream they're in. And that tells you to come and stop with me."

Now Tim knew this was wise. But he also knew that turning aside might mean a week or two weeks away from home. He had promised his mother to be back in four days. If he did not return, she would worry one day and then fear the worst. "I promised I'd be back," he told Ecker. "Mother'd worry."

The woodsman held out his big hand. "If it's storming too hard to-morrow, make it back up the trail to here and come and stop with us. Don't be a fool. Good-bye!"

When he had turned up a steep and very rough trail Tim felt alone. He hastened on. The ox-tracks were no longer to be seen, but he saw the tracks of the light, sure-footed beasts of the Siletz. Now and then a dark, solitary bird flitted away or a musk-rat dived briskly in some little stream as he waded it. The wind was coming down on him and the tree tops thrashed above, throwing adrift great streamers of moss. He was glad when he came into an open bit of bottom land and saw the cabin he was headed for. It was built of logs set

upright in the ground and roofed with spruce shakes. A wooden chimney leaned up against one end of it. A well-sweep stood stiffly in the air. On the tip of it was perched a bird he did not know. A miserable fence of small saplings lay prone where the garden had been. On his left hand was the river, swiftly flowing seaward. On the other a dull creek wandered through the clearing, entirely covered over here and there with small drift. When he came in front of this abandoned place he stopped. A huge hemlock with upturned, spreading roots lay across the brushy trail to the door.

Something told him that that tree had never grown near that spot. The river had brought it there.

He climbed over and saw that he was right. The floor of the cabin was inches deep with caked mud and silt, traced with the tracks of a thousand small animals.

The Siletz had flowed over its banks and wrecked that poor house at some time.

He found the stove in working order, set within the fireplace opening, and he turned to the business of wood-getting. By good fortune a small pile of dry fuel was heaped in one corner and his knife did good service on a small log outside. Before he had worked over an hour it was almost dark. A lantern hung on a nail and had half a candle in it still. There was a bed-frame made of rope, and he

soon filled this with twigs and moss that had evidently dropped out of the chinks in the wall. The water in the well was bad, so he filled an old pail from the river, noticing as he did so that small drift was already going downstream. When he had his frying-pan on the little stove the first gusts of rain were swashing across the roof and hissing down the chimney.

After he had cleaned up and fixed the fire again he lit the lantern and investigated the whole place. It was of two rooms, with a remnant of shed behind it that had evidently been washed away by the freshet. The water mark on the walls was twenty inches above the floor. The single window was covered with a rotted bit of canvas which his best endeavours could not fix, so he was compelled to go out, hack a small branch off the hemlock and fasten this over the opening.

His last task was to go outside, see how high the river was and set a mark. Then a very weary but very wide-awake Tim climbed into the rude bed and prepared to spend fourteen hours of darkness as best he could. He did not expect to sleep, but the roar of the wind, the steady thunder of the river and the wash of rain on the shakes soon soothed him.

He was awakened just at dawn by a strange sense of having been spoken to sharply. He listened, sat up and quietly got his knife. It was too

dark in the room to see distinctly, so he lit the lantern. Then he stole to the door and listened again. Something was scratching at it. Then he heard another sound that assured him a living thing was seeking entrance — breathing. Yet that steady pleading for admittance did not scare him. It seemed almost pitiful. He laughed. It was a dog. He opened the door. A big yellow hound walked in, sniffed his outstretched hand and then walked all round the room, steadily smelling, gazing now and then intently into corners. After its first recognition of his presence it paid no attention to Tim. And then he closed the door and followed the animal, holding the light so that its beam would light the crevices it smelled of. And these cracks glistened, sparkled in the beam of light, seemed to swell inward. The hound growled. Tim stooped over shiveringly and saw that it was water.

He ran to the door and looked out carefully. Then he stepped down on the puncheon in front of the door. It rolled with him slightly. The river was risen over its banks and coming in.

When it was full daylight Tim saw his predicament. The house had been built on the only real elevation in this bottom-land. The creek between it and the mountain had flowed outward; the Siletz had flowed inward. Only many stumps here and there showed that the sheet of water was not very deep.

He considered this a long time and decided that he would try to attain the mountain behind the house. He saw that the creek was still almost covered here and there with drift. He would walk the logs and at least be sure of not being drowned. He went back into the cabin and measured that line which had been left on the wall by the former freshet. Then he knew that this would put out his fire and, possibly, another huge tree might float down and this time strike the house.

Before he had packed up and eaten his breakfast (not forgetting the hound) little branches of water were oozing across the uneven floor. One look at the river was enough. It was whitening every minute. Its roar (forgotten when he did not listen for it) was steadily flowing upstream from some gorge below and, worst of all, huge trees were coming swiftly down it and the rain was growing heavier.

"It's both rising in the upper country and raining into it here," he calculated. "Come on, pup."

The dog followed him quietly outside, wading and swimming towards the well-sweep which still pointed its dreary finger into the sky. Tim avoided this, marked a stump that seemed to be in quite shallow water, and reaching that found by sounding with a pole that there was six feet of water on the farther side. The dog swam round slowly and

then made back for the cabin without a glance behind.

"First the fish and then the dog," thought Tim. "I didn't take the fish's warning so I'll take the dog's."

He built up the fire in the stove and piled the remaining fuel high up in the bed to keep dry. Then he and the dog sat together on a rough table and looked out at the river.

"Maybe somebody will be coming down, though I don't see how any boat could live in that stream, old pup."

The dog whined.

At noon there was a foot of water in the cabin.

"Slowing up," Tim said more cheerfully. Then he remembered that rivers must necessarily rise more slowly when they overflow their banks.

It was still rising at three o'clock and the dog was steadily whining. He and Tim huddled together on the table. The cabin was still in quiet water, as the white of the river had not yet worked in. It was dark and there was little hope of starting a fire in the stove. During these long hours Tim had fixed more solidly the hound's collar, a heavy, brass-studded affair with the words BLACK BRUIN on the plate.

"Wonder why they called a yellow dog black," Tim thought miserably. There was no owner's name.

It was four o'clock when a crash on the door was followed by its slowly breaking from its hinges and floating on the water. The opening was filled by an enormous mass. Tim knew that it was the crest of a drifting tree. The pressure of it against the cabin was making every wall creak and give. The branches seemed to the boy to be reaching in to get at him. At last a heavy broken end of some limb struck him roughly on the leg. He followed the dog in a wild leap into the tangle of branches.

In the dusk Tim saw that it was a very large tree and that the top had been broken off. At the far end, which was on the edge of the white line of the eddy, a few stout roots thrust themselves up a good ten or twelve feet. Black Bruin and he scrambled along the quivering trunk till they reached the lowest branch. The dog would not stop here, and once more Tim followed him, though a bent part of the stem was under water. When they climbed up into the great roots the dog sniffed at some earth that still clung in the crotches and quietly lay down.

As he did so the majestic bulk of the great fir slipped on over the ruins of the cabin, rolled slightly, swung outward to the pull of a surge in the river and then swiftly picked up speed. A moment later the roar of the water in the gorge in the river below them was steadily increasing. They were out in midstream, the top of the tree going first, the

roots riding quietly and almost motionlessly in the tumbling, swirling, foaming freshet.

For some time Tim was dazed. Terror had strong hold of his heart. He feared that any instant the tree might start to roll and crush him down into the terrible stream which poured its tremendous volume through the gorge that narrowed ahead. He could not understand the hound's stillness. He dug his whole hand under its stout collar. It snuggled a little closer, sniffed once or twice and then fell into repose again. Tim reached up one hand to haul him higher up. His fingers felt soft mud, and it came over him that his companion had known that that mud could not be there if the tree in its journey down the river had ever rolled over. The sole danger to them now was that it might go aground in a riffle and swing broadside. Then the mighty Siletz would wash them off and away forever.

It seemed hours to the boy but it was really only minutes that they rode their wild steed down the fierce current. In an eddy that marked a long bend below the gorge their carrier swung heavily towards the left bank, slowed up and finally came to rest in what looked to be a grove of small trees deep in water.

It was fully dark and no light appeared. The dog sniffed at Tim's pack sack and they made a meal together on cold bacon and dry bread.

It was bitterly cold, and at last Tim rose to stretch himself. Then he knew that a third one had joined them. He could not see what it was, but as Black Bruin seemed indifferent he accepted this invisible presence as one will when one has given all into the hands of chance.

Tim finally slept close to the dog. He wakened now and then to realise that the tree was moving. Branches crashed sometimes against the roots in whose shelter they lay. Two or three times the hound growled. Then a great peace fell. The wind still thundered through the cleft in the mountains and the river roared and the rain splashed down. But the tree was like a rock.

At daylight, which came so slowly that Tim had strained his eyes a thousand times to distinguish his surroundings, he saw that the huge tree had stranded amid a thicket of salmon bushes. On his right hand he could discern the white stream of the Siletz, filled with immense trees adrift which sailed down as if in response to some call for which they had waited a thousand years. On the other side stretched what seemed to be a great lake, dotted with clumps of alders, its horizon marked by the other mountain. Right through the middle of this ran a low ridge of land which emerged from the forest above and continued on across the lake to the mountain far below; it ran parallel with the Siletz.

For a long time Tim looked at this. At last he saw that something was walking along this distant ridge. It was followed at some distance by another thing — low things that kept a steady pace onward and never stopped. It seemed to him that as he gazed other things emerged from the lake and climbed up on this ridge and started a steady pace, stopping nowhere even to look around. Then he saw the hound slide down the root he was on and start out on the trunk which lay half submerged and extended in a wavy line to the branches. With a little leap the dog was in the water and began to swim steadily for the ridge. In wild terror of being abandoned by his sole companion Tim leaped down, and before he knew it was wading up to his arm-pits after the dog. He held his pack up as high as he could, but the first stumble brought him to his knees.

For a moment he struggled and then let the sack go. He knew that his matches and knife were safe, the former carefully stowed in a water-proof brass can which he never let go from his belt. He started on after the hound, who was now leaping through shallower water, and caught up with him just as another deeper channel intervened.

He gained the ridge without having to swim more than a few strokes, halted breathlessly, hung to a small sapling a moment and then scrambled up. Instantly the dog fell back beside him and they plodded

steadily on through the lank, tufted grass, the salmon-berry brush and the occasional tendrils of vine-maple.

Ahead of him Tim saw that there were many things, steadily on their way to the distant mountain-side against which this ridge ended, so far as he could decide. They seemed to be animals, animals that were hurrying without turning to some unknown goal. Some were large and some small. They were joined now and then by other animals that climbed up out of the water and fell into the same changeless gait. He felt a strange sense in his own breast of something always behind him, of having to make that mountain by hook or by crook, of not having breath to spare or eyes to see anything but the long ridge that ran like a narrow strip of safety across this great, strange lake. The dog trotted along by his side. He put his hand on it. It snapped back at it and then turned its nose ahead as if it had instantly forgotten the offence.

And all this time there was the roar of the river far to the right and its stubborn, unchanging flow of swift, white water dotted with trees that slipped silently down it and overhead was the roar of the gale and the slashing of the rain.

For what seemed hours he trudged on; occasionally he felt utterly worn out; but something greater than himself thrust him on and he did not slacken his pace. He could not tell when he be-

came conscious of the fact that for miles behind him stretched the line of creatures advancing across this ridge. But it was long before he turned a glance backwards. It was true: animals were stepping softly and steadily behind him, an immense procession of them, of many forms and various sizes, all silent, voiceless.

"That's a bear just behind me," he thought. "A black bear that limps a little."

This kept in his mind a long time. He looked back again. "It *is* a bear," he thought. "It has been holed up for the winter. Its paws are soft. The river washed into its den. It is dripping."

And later he saw that he knew some of the many creatures that went before him. A big mountain cat padded along, with its head low and swinging ever so lightly. Another smaller cat was near it, but they paid no attention to each other. Farther on a deer lifted its feet high and put them down gently, incessantly going onward. Little beasts sped along close to the ground like terriers on a scent. A black, otter-like thing was not fifty feet ahead of the hound by his side; and yet the dog seemed unconscious of it.

And now and again some other thing would crawl up out of the lake and join the great line.

Then Tim noticed that this ridge of earth stretching across the lake was getting narrower. It did not rise so high above the water; it was soggier under

foot; it seemed melting slowly. And the thought of this frightened him, and he laid his hand on the hound that trotted beside him and again it snapped at him, blindly, as if it had no moment even for a glance at him. He knew that it was afraid of something behind them.

So he went on through the falling rain over the slowly melting ridge of dry land towards the mountain. He found himself gradually hastening his step to keep up with the hound. Yet he got no nearer to the black creature just ahead nor, as he found by looking back, from the bear behind him. All were hurrying faster.

Then the clouds thickened over him and the rain came down in sheets that hid everything for whole minutes at a time. Yet each slight clearing up showed him that he was exactly the same distance behind the creature ahead.

The wind rushed wildly across the lake, picking it up in little strings of foam, and the river seemed to swell far to the right into a stream that threatened to break out of its course and sweep over the lake and across the diminishing ridge on which he walked.

Slowly the shadow of the mountain darkened over the great expanse of water, and by this time he was wading to his ankles. The hound was leaping once in a while. The ridge was vanishing, all

except the emerging tips of the grass and an occasional little sapling that waved in the current that now flowed over the dike. Later he was to his waist and ahead of him he saw creatures jumping and swimming, but always keeping on the line of the ridge. The mountain was close.

When he reached it he was suddenly afraid. The trail at his feet was trampled deep with tracks and hoof-marks, and on every hand he heard the crash of big bodies making way through the brush or the little noises of smaller beasts hunting shelter. Then he felt the dog's cold muzzle in his hand and heard its whine. He patted it and it licked his fingers. He felt it quiver and draw closer to him. He knew it was afraid of something.

He went on up the trail, which led along a shoulder of the mountain, till it was almost dark. The path was steep and rocky now, and it was no longer marked with animal tracks. "I must camp till morning," he thought dully. He stopped.

But the hound tugged at his coat and he walked on. Finally he put his fingers into the big collar and allowed the dog to take his own way. He heard the roar of the river below him, the thrashing of the gale above and felt the icy rain on his face, but it did not seem to affect his senses. So he was amazed to suddenly feel the collar jerked out of his hand. He reached out and his hand struck

a fence lined with wire on the top rail. Gradually he saw that he was staring at a light that suddenly grew into a great square. A voice called out, "Who's there?"

He heard the dog yelping and another voice say, "Hubbard's dog from way up the river. How did the animal get here, in heaven's name?"

The other voice said sharply, "There's somebody out there. Come on quickly!"

Then a light shone full into Tim's eyes and he heard somebody say, "Boy!" Then he went to sleep.

An hour later Tim opened his eyes and looked into a face that he did not know. He was hungry and told the face that he was. Then he saw that it belonged to a woman and got weakly off the couch he was lying on.

He drank the hot milk and beef broth and then said, "Where's my pack?"

"Pack?" said a man, coming forward. "You didn't have one — where did you come from?"

"I remember," Tim said slowly. "I had to leave my pack."

"Where did you come from?" demanded the woman sharply.

"Canoe Landing."

"Impossible!"

"Slept in that deserted house below Ecker's one night."

Man looked at woman and the man said quietly, "Son, where did you cross the river?"

"The deserted house was taken away by a big tree and then we walked across a lake."

There was a silence. The hound suddenly rushed towards the door, barking furiously. Tim started up. The woman pushed him gently back to his seat. "That's only animals frightened out of the river bottoms and valleys by the freshets," she said soothingly. "The storm has driven everything wild down this way towards the Coast. They're passing all the time, and that's what scares the dog."

"Yes, I came with a lot of them," said Tim, drowsily. "I and the dog here. We crossed a lake on a dike."

The man glanced uneasily at his wife. "He means he crossed on that big beaver dam that stretches far below Butterfield's to our place. I told you it was under water at dark — first time in forty years, the Indians say."

"No wonder the animals are frightened," she murmured.

Then Tim woke up to the fact that he still had some distance to go. "Where am I?"

"This is the Baird place just below Kiota Rock."

"I've got to get on to the Bay," said Tim. "I promised my mother I'd be gone only four days. This makes the third."

"Stay till to-morrow," she insisted, and Tim agreed.

The next morning Mr. Baird was very inquisitive about Tim's experiences and insisted that he couldn't have crossed the lake. And as Tim Culver recalled the many things he had seen he decided to say nothing.

But he knew that animals are very wise and that they are the best guides through the forest and where the rivers run white.

HIS THIRD ENLISTMENT

MOST of the old men who come to Yaquina Bay for the summer are always fishing off the wharves or walking briskly on the ocean beach or engaged in lively conversation on a hotel porch. There are very many of these old gentlemen; they come from all quarters of the world for the salmon trolling.

Young Robinson had noticed one man, however, who was at the same stylishly dressed, old, and yet stayed by himself and spoke rarely to any one. He never went fishing nor crabbing. He simply walked each morning to the old Government wharf at the landward end of North Jetty, and there sat in a nook until luncheon time, returning at two o'clock to remain silent and motionless till dusk. He wore an immense white moustache over a heavy chin, good clothes and riding boots with the bottoms of his trousers strapped tightly down over them.

"Queer duck," Young Robinson thought to himself each time that he saw him. Later he found out that the old man's name was Archibald, and that he was supposed to be wealthy and eccentric.

The first time that Mr. Archibald took any notice

whatever of the boys was the second day they had their uniforms. They had just finished boat drill, and when Robinson came up on the wharf with his fish-line to try for a cod he had barely got his throw made when he was tapped on the shoulder.

"Boy, what's that uniform?"

"Scouts, sir — Boy Scouts."

The old man pulled at his moustache. "Hum!" he said briefly. "I don't think I understand."

Robinson tried to make it plain and succeeded finally in getting the old man's nod of assent. "I see now. I *do* understand."

At cabin headquarters Young Robinson told his experience. "And he's got a big scar under his moustache and another one on his wrist."

"Wears boots like these cavalry colonels," Bob Spencer remarked. "Maybe he's a soldier."

"Too old."

The very next day Mr. Archibald stopped Tad Sheldon on the street. "Do you Boy Scouts carry guns?"

"No, sir."

"Good."

"Hunt?"

"Only to see what we can find out about animals, sir."

The old man seemed deep in meditation. Tad was just slipping away when Archibald said, "I was a soldier myself — a long time. I learned a

lot just being a soldier — not from fighting, but from obeying orders and keeping myself neat and having to go anywhere I was sent under any conditions of service."

Tad considered this but said nothing. Mr. Archibald nodded, as if to himself, and went on:

"It's the service, son. A young chap says he's in the army. The veteran talks of the *Service,* and that's the right word, young man."

Spencer and Young Robinson found him in his usual nook on the wharf that afternoon and he greeted them and sat down between them on the string-piece.

"I was telling one of your comrades that I had been in the Service myself," he said slowly. "You're scouts and I — I *was* a soldier. You're still in the service and I'm out of it." He sighed. Then he added simply, "I wish I could enlist again."

"Too old, sir?" asked Spencer respectfully.

"Too old. And once they told me I was too young. But they took me just the same — back in '61 and they took me again in '98. I'd like to go back, but I — I'm too old to — to *serve,* they say."

Young Robinson forgot his fishing a moment. "Were you in many battles, sir?"

"Forty-one in the Civil War and eight in the Spanish-American war."

"Whee! I'll bet you were wounded!"

"Yes. That was part of the service then. But it wasn't the fighting I liked. It was just having mates and comrades and orders and plenty to do and knowing that you were doing your duty."

"You weren't in the army between the two wars?" asked Spencer.

"No. I went into business. But I grew old at that and I was glad when I could enlist again. I'd like to serve once more. But that's all past and gone."

The old man sighed and was silent.

After that they grew quite intimate with him, and he was interested in all their drills and hikes and studies; when they finally had him up to their cabin among the bull-pines on the hill and built a big fire and cooked him clams and bacon over it and made coffee for him, he was delighted. He grew to be a familiar figure until the end of the season came and the visitors packed up and Mr. Archibald quietly departed with them for the Outside.

"I kind of miss the old boy," Tad remarked a few weeks later.

"Clerk at the hotel told me he went back to some city in New Jersey where he lives."

"Wonder what he came all this way for? He never went fishing," said Spencer.

Tim Culver threw a little light on this. The old man had told him once that he wanted to get entirely away from cities and towns.

It was in January that Tad nearly walked off the edge of old Government wharf at seeing Mr. Archibald sitting in his nook just as if he had never left it.

Tad saluted and made polite inquiries.

Mr. Archibald pulled at his great moustache for a little while. Then he said, "If you boys will let me, I want some advice from you. I came clear across the continent for that. I'd like to put it before you all. You may not be able to do anything but I'd like you to try."

Astonished as he could not help being, Sheldon responded that he was welcome at the cabin any time.

"Then I'll come up this afternoon if you'll all be there."

"Certainly, sir."

When Tad passed the word around that Mr. Archibald was come back and that he wished to meet them all that afternoon, there were many expressions of amazement.

"Wonder what's the matter with him?"

"Dotty."

"Cracked."

"Look here, fellows," Tad put in, "you know he's a decent sort of a man; he's decent in every way, even to wanting to enlist as a soldier again and fight for the flag. Now he's not only a veteran, but you know he's always somehow given us to un-

derstand he considered us youngsters his comrades. He treats us as if we *belonged.*"

"Right," said Spencer.

"Correct," added Culver. "Somehow I *did* kind of feel he thought we were — well, we were —"

Young Robinson turned from a study of the rules to finish Culver's sentence. "In the service."

When the old man appeared, his huge moustache bristling over his tightly buttoned coat collar, they shook hands with him and gave him the seat of honour. He warmed his hands at the blaze, and as he did so Spencer nudged Culver in the ribs. They saw the purple scars that netted his hands. It gave them a solemn feeling to know that this old soldier had come several thousand miles to ask *them* something. What could it be?

Mr. Archibald was not a talkative man at any time. Now he wasted no words on preliminaries:

"I've come for advice," he began harshly. "You all know that I have served two enlistments. I am too old, now, for a third. I have a home and a business back East. I am old. I have little more time. But I want to be on active service once more before I die."

The old man thrust his scarred hands into his breast pocket and pulled out a neatly taped envelope and undid the tape with shaking fingers. He handed the enclosures to Tad Sheldon.

"Honourable discharges from the United States Army, sir," he said more harshly than ever. "And three brevets for gallantry."

Tad stared at the papers respectfully. There was no movement in the room.

"In view of my honourable service," Mr. Archibald resumed, "I should like the privilege of at least one more day's active service."

There was another stillness.

"With your troop, sir," he concluded.

Tad nodded curtly to conceal his feelings and then turned to the window. The papers burned in his hands, those papers that represented a man's honourable life. His service as a scout had taught him something of the sacredness of such things, those brief histories of service rendered at risk of life and peril of death. And yet —

He turned around and handed the papers back unopened. "We're only boys, sir. We do what we can but —" he pointed to the bright seal uppermost —"we don't get any chances for *that*."

"I know," Mr. Archibald said quietly. "I understand that the age limit in your service is eighteen years. I have found no limit to the age at which one may volunteer." He rose, drawing himself stiffly. "I shall leave it to your consideration."

He bowed and stepped out of the door. He walked down the brown trail towards the bay.

"Gosh!" whispered Tim Culver; Young Robin-

son was staring wet-eyed at the ledge over the fireplace.

"He must have been a bully fighter!" said Bob Spencer.

Tad turned fiercely on them all. "Fellows, shut up! He *meant* it! Don't you see? He's fought and served and now they won't have him any more. He's too old! But —"

"Take him as a volunteer," said Spencer.

"Sure. Let's have him!"

When it was decided to accept him Tad commissioned Spencer and Kit Carson to notify him to appear the next morning. "And ask him if we can see those papers again," he added.

So the next morning James C. Archibald was duly enrolled as the volunteer member of the Yaquina Bay Boy Scouts, and after that formality, conducted with due decorum, the scouts gathered round him and read his discharge papers and his brevet commissions. Later Tad bashfully told him their signals and pass-words and made him free of the cabin.

But Tad knew that this was only the beginning of the matter. He took Kit Carson for a walk along the reef a few nights thereafter, and they debated back and forth what they could possibly do to get Volunteer Archibald some active work.

The best they could do was to plan for a short hike towards Toledo, their professed object being to see

whether the channel at the foot of the big point had shoaled up.

"It'll give him something to do, and the walk won't hurt him," Kit said.

So orders were given for a hike to start promptly at ten o'clock on the following Saturday morning, each scout to bring his camping outfit and grub.

"We always meet at the cabin," Tad explained to Archibald. "Then we don't have to go through the town at all."

The old man nodded stiffly. "I have my equipment, sir."

That Saturday morning turned out bright and clear, with a keen East wind blowing and every mountain and peak standing out distinctly. When the scouts met they found Mr. Archibald there with a new look on his face. All the stiffness was gone from his gait, his face was ruddy above the white moustache (now waxed in two great points) and he had regular cavalry breeches tucked into his boots and a heavy flannel shirt and felt hat.

So they set out, the boys keeping in good marching order till they had reached the wooded hill two miles out of town and then scattering on various scouting expeditions and searches for new trails and blazes. Tad and Archibald walked along to the ceaseless, bluff chat of the old man. He joked, told stories, fell back into the ways of his youth. He engaged to make coffee in an oil can that

wouldn't taste of kerosene, to make bread on a shaving with a pinch of flour and a drop of water and bake it over a single match. He swore roundly that if they had to hike too far before finding something to engage them he should quit scouting and take up candy-making for the excitement — and Tad knew a little more of the prodigious hunger of age for the light days of one's reckless youth.

At half-past twelve they made camp, and the old man showed them a dozen tricks, called every one by his nickname, and dubbed Bob Spencer, who had never had one, bob-cat, or "Cat" for short. And in the midst of this gaiety something happened.

From a steep, rocky trail above them came a series of screams, sharp yelping shrieks that made every man drop what he had in his hand and look at Tad.

"Fall in!" said Tad sharply. "Up that trail towards Indian Joe's. Kit, drop to the right, and you, Culver, go to the left and ahead. Report as soon as you can. We'll be right behind you on the trail."

To Archibald he explained briefly, "Indians live up there — a lot of 'em. Get full on bad whiskey and beat their wives and kill each other."

The old man said nothing, but Tad saw him stretch into a long stride and fumble at his belt for the holster that was not there.

"We don't use guns," Tad said simply, and the old man's eyes flashed and he smiled.

A hundred yards up the trail Kit Carson slipped out of the timber and said breathlessly, "It was a woman screaming, and two men are scrapping with knives! Right in front of the cabin!"

A moment later Tim Culver reported the same thing, and they hurried together up the steep incline. They wondered why there were no more screams. That was soon explained. They made a sharp turn and found themselves at the edge of a two-acre clearing and almost within fifty feet of the cabin door. The woman was kneeling, silently bobbing her head up and down, evidently struggling to scream again. Not ten feet away from her two Indians were darting around each other with long knives in their hands and stabbing furiously at any opening either offered. And just as the scouts looked to their leader for some order a third man reeled out of the cabin, bottle in hand, and —

Tad knew that seconds must decide whether they saw murder and death or stopped the fight. "Catch that drunk and throw him against the other two," he whispered. "Now, altogether!"

The manœuvre succeeded perfectly. Their strong arms lifted the dazed wretch with the bottle and flung him heavily against the two fighters who had had eyes for nothing but each other's throats.

"Get their knives!" Tad yelled.

They managed to snatch one knife that had fallen to the ground, and its owner, finding his hands empty, scrambled up and fled like a deer into the timber. But the other man, a huge fellow, not only kept his weapon but managed to cast off the grips the boys had on him. The effort he made saved lives, for he stepped back against a root and fell on his back.

He was up again like a cat, and then Tad realised that he had led his scouts into a predicament some of them would never leave alive. The Indian had his distance now, and, far from showing fear, was evidently preparing an onset. To flee was fatal to some one. To stay was to invite death for all. Indian Joe was known as a bad man, of terrific strength and ferocious temper. Every bad drop in his bad blood was boiling now, but, Indianlike, he did not lose any of his cunning.

Forty feet intervened between the desperado and the little group, the little crowd of weaponless boys. And then Archibald's harsh voice broke the silence:

"Let me go, sir!"

In that instant Tad knew what it meant to be a leader in a fight. His was the decision. He made it: "Go, Archibald!"

The old man stepped forward five feet, clutched his soft hat in one hand and grunted. Tad's fascinated eyes saw the big scarred hands creep slowly out of the shirt sleeves. He saw that steady,

stealthy movement of the booted feet, the sudden lifting at the hips as Archibald poised himself. And then slowly grew into the focus of the boy's vision another figure, almost black, with strange red eyes, with a long knife, with teeth withdrawn in a snarl. But he thought to unloose his belt and the others followed his example.

Suddenly the woman screamed. The man who had been first thrown had crawled to his feet and was raising the broken bottle to strike the squaw. As she lifted her agonised face the scouts saw that she had been struck before. And then there was a yell, a terrific bump, and they saw the old man knock over the second fellow at one leap and turn again to face the man with the knife. They were a bare ten feet apart. The white man was smiling grimly, the tips of his white moustache rising. The Indian suddenly dashed at him.

It was bravely done. Old Archibald caught the blade in his hand and with his fist struck the Indian under the ear. His grasp on the knife relaxed, he fell like a corpse. But Archibald had been old. The knife had been driven, in spite of his hold on it, deep into his side.

Working furiously, Tad and Kit bound the prostrate desperado with their belts, while Spencer and Robinson tried to raise Archibald. He shook his head at them. Spencer gave him a drink out of his flask, and Robinson began his first-aid on the angry

puncture that marked where the weapon had entered.

When Tad and Kit could come over the old man smiled up at them. "Arm was weak and he got me. Did I get him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now —"

"We're fixing a litter, sir, as Spencer says you can't walk even to the cabin."

The old man's eyes closed a moment. When he opened them again he fixed his stare on the clear sky above the swaying tree tops. There was that in that look that kept the boys still a time. Gradually the eyes dimmed. A fleck of blood darkened the white moustache. Tad stooped down, bareheaded.

"I beg to report, sir —" began the slow words forming on the lips of the dying man,—"I beg to report, sir, for — for active service."

The body of James C. Archibald, Colonel of Cavalry, lies under a big stone in Arlington, with all his titles duly set forth.

But in the little cabin of the Yaquina Boy Scouts there is a simple plate that records the Third Enlistment of simple James C. Archibald and underneath that inscription is this word:

"SERVICE"

SALVAGE

THE United States Life Saving Service is the closest-mouthed in the world about its family affairs. It was started by the man who has always superintended it, there isn't an easy job in its gift, and from the taciturn, iron-willed superintendent at the head to the last substitute patrolling some deserted beach runs the red of its blood: hatred of a coward. So when Tad Sheldon, son of Number One in the Yaquina Bay crew, looked queerly at his chum, Kit Carson, at mention of a name twice Kit broke out bitterly, "Dad never told."

Carson's father, Number Four, had lost his life while boarding a wreck up the coast.

"I know that," Tad replied. "But — I guess it's plain enough that it was — that Huddleston lost his head."

"And Dad his life."

Huddleston was Number Five and had been transferred to Yaquina a year before from a California station. He was a debonair young man, with a nice wife, a chubby son and amiable ways that made him socially popular. Nobody except those in the service knew why Captain Evans, the keeper, didn't ask

him to his house any more, and it may be doubted whether a word had been spoken to indicate that Number Five was not trusted.

"Anyway," Tad went on, rather uneasily, "we don't know anything about it. Leave it to the keeper."

Kit stared out through the pines at the sea that had robbed him of his father and said nothing for a while. In his heart was a great bitterness against Huddleston — Huddleston, with his cheery smile, his laughing child, his pretty wife. And Huddleston had done that indefinable thing which had cost a life. Very often cowardice that kills consists in a mere "letting down" in a pinch without actually flinching. Carson had never let down; so his wife and four children were dependent on their own exertions and the good offices of the crew.

Tad knew what his chum was thinking about and shoved an arm across the squared shoulders.

"Say, Kit, they're just giving him another chance."

Kit nodded silently.

"And — well, it's only square to give a fellow another chance."

"It may be the whole crew next time," Kit replied slowly. "You know that it's up to one man often to — to be *there* on the second. What if it's your father next time?"

Tad smiled in a troubled way. "Dad's giving him the chance."

A little later when the boy felt better Tad merely pointed to the word on a plate on the wall above the fireplace. "It's all in the *service,* Kit. And so long as Huddleston is in the service, it's up to us to back him up and help him."

"Can't help him."

"You can."

"How?"

"By letting him have a chance. Everybody knows it was you that he hurt most." Tad's eyes met his chum's. "Your dad would have given him another opportunity to make good, and you know it. What if he doesn't get his chance? He'll have to leave the service, and you know what *that* means."

"You mean by not talking?" Carson demanded wrathfully. "We never said a word! Even mother's never mentioned his name."

"I know," Sheldon answered. "Just the same, you don't feel right and you'd laugh if he got broke."

It was not a month until it got into the air (without a word said) that the Carsons didn't feel ill towards the Huddlestons. Mrs. Carson went over when Mrs. Huddleston was sick and scolded her husband in the friendliest style. Then she took the

child for the day, and returned him with a particular pudding which she alone knew the mystery of.

"Sheldon," said Keeper Evans to his lieutenant, "I'm glad the Carsons have taken it that way. It helps me a lot." Evans cast a thoughtful blue eye out over the coast he guarded. "I was afraid it might make a little unfriendliness among the crew."

"Young Carson is a good kid."

"Hope he'll stick to the service."

"Probably will. Tad and he are good chums, and Tad expects to join as soon as he's old enough and had enough experience."

Now Huddleston himself knew that he had failed at a pinch and that he had been looked on with the chill suspicion which condemns a life saver if it is not quickly removed. But he knew that he had a yellow streak, and he was honest enough with himself to confess it secretly in his own heart. But he was unwilling to resign, and he was not bold enough to forego risking his mates' lives once more. So when the Carsons refused to look askance at him he drew a long breath of relief. *That* was a by-gone.

He was not aware that Kit Carson was steadily watching him, studying him, figuring on his activity, observing him under all situations, listening to every casual word. Kit and his mother had opened their hearts to each other one night and tearfully agreed that not only should Huddleston have a second

chance, but that he should take good advantage of it.

"Your father would want that, Kit," she concluded. "He always was saying that every man ought to have plenty of time to make good and find himself. He — he said something about Huddleston two weeks before that last wreck."

"Then he knew!"

"But he said that some day if he was handled right Huddleston would be all right."

This was why one day when word came for the crew to go up the coast to visit a steamer in distress Kit Carson nodded at seeing Huddleston left behind. He had helped with the boat till she rode safely and then Captain Evans had motioned Huddleston out of his place and a substitute into it.

"Easy pull just to see what's happened to some crazy old skipper who only wants his position and a late paper," the boy thought quickly. "Good training for the sub and I guess Huddleston don't go with the boat any more unless it's business."

There are two kinds of holidays in the life-saving service: those given to men who are absolutely needed in difficulty and danger and those forced upon others who shall be grimly set aside until the chance comes for them either to establish their footing or lose it for ever. Kit surmised that Number Five's day on the beach was of the second variety.

Huddleston himself strolled along the sands whistling, saw Kit and dropped down beside him. "Glad I didn't go," he said easily, glancing at the sky. "Easy sail up and an all night's pull back against the southerly wind. S'pose we take the skiff and cross over to the other beach for some clams."

Kit agreed and they landed on South Spit, made the boat fast and tramped along the jetty towards the ocean beach. As they passed the wreck of the *Willamette* the life saver stopped and stared at it meditatively. As they passed on he murmured half to himself: "This *is* some coast, Kit."

"It's no place for cowards."

"You are right," said the surfman, smiling. "And I understand there haven't been many in the Yaquina Bay crew."

From this they fell to speaking of the many disasters that have made the seventy mile stretch they were on infamous among seafarers, Huddleston recalling one and Carson capping it with another.

But neither mentioned the wreck that had cost the life of Surfman Number Four.

With their sack filled with clams they sat on a teredo-eaten spar and rested. The southerly wind was tipping the long grey rollers with spume and far down the westerly horizon a dark belt of cloud lay asleep. They both looked at it and both knew that the wind would freshen and make it a hard

pull back for the boat. The bar was already roughening and now and again a wave that seemed even lower than the others would steadily climb up the sands as if thrust forward by millions of small, invisible feet that dug into the beach and would not let go.

"Ground swell," Kit remarked carelessly.

"That's what makes it bad among the breakers. Never can tell when it'll let up. Just pulls and sucks and twists."

"The *Condor's* due this evening. Probably have to lie outside."

"Never liked those gas-schooners," the surfman commented. "Engines are too tricky. But they're money-makers."

"If anything happens to-night you'll have it all to yourself," the boy remarked.

Huddleston grinned. "Nothing to-night for me except look-out."

At sundown that evening Kit took a run to the bluff overlooking the ocean to see whether the lifeboat was in sight coming back. He could not see it, but a small object rising and dipping just off Cape Foulweather assured him that the little gasoline schooner *Condor* was homeward bound, from the Columbia river.

"Easy bar, too," he commented. "Flood tide for an hour yet and wind just freshening. She'll be in to-night."

Yet at eight o'clock he could no longer sit still over his book.

"Say, mother, I'm going to run up to the look-out and watch the *Condor* come in."

She nodded. "I suppose Mr. Huddleston is on watch? I'll put the chickies to bed and run over and see Mrs. Huddleston. She'll be lonely."

Kit climbed the great white tower that used so long to be a lighthouse but now serves as a look-out for the life savers. He found Number Five scanning the outer bar through the glass.

"Is she coming in?" Kit demanded.

"Yes. She's been a good while rounding the whistler, though. And the tide is turning. Guess their engines are working badly."

"There's wind enough to sail in with."

"Not if the tide gets well started on the ebb."

They both watched the schooner as it steadily made its way towards the line of white that marked the breakers. They saw her swing into the channel and take the bar slowly but safely. When she was just inside Huddleston put down the telescope.

"That's all the excitement to-night," he said, reaching for his pipe.

But at the instant there came the staccato shrieks of a whistle. The surfman grabbed up his glass and fixed it on the little group of lights. Then he set it quietly down and made for the ladder. Kit followed him.

"Her engines are gone back on her," Huddleston explained as they raced for the steps to the boat-house. "They're anchoring. She's just inside the bar and all right. Ebb-tide caught her."

"Maybe she bumped her propeller off," said Kit.

They reached the soft sand of the bay beach and raced across it. Then the whistle began its barking cry for help again and Huddleston stopped to peer into the dusk. Kit stood beside him.

"She's swung broadside to," the surfman gasped. "Anchors wouldn't hold, I guess."

"Then she'll drift back on the bar and be wrecked."

Huddleston had his lit lantern in his hand and waved it furiously. Then he stared again, shading his eyes. He groaned.

"And the crew's not here!"

"There's the gun, if she goes ashore," Kit said quietly.

"Nobody to pull it through the sand or rig the gear."

"Those whistles will bring plenty of men," said the experienced Kit. "I'll bet she'll strike just off the north jetty."

But they saw the lights steadily setting across the channel towards the south jetty along which they could see the seas sweeping in great curved crests. Huddleston groaned again.

"If they strike there we can't reach them at all. The surf is running on both sides of the rocks. Everything is useless!"

Kit took one more look that assured him that the schooner would indeed be carried right into the most dangerous position possible where many vessels stouter than she had dashed themselves to pieces. He also knew that there was but one chance in a million of saving any of the lives on board. There was that one chance. He laid a steady hand on the surfman's arm.

"Mr. Huddleston, the whole town will be here in a few minutes. My father would have left this shore to them and gone over to the jetty."

The arm trembled. Huddleston was silent. Then he said huskily: "Never can get there! And — it's death to try it!"

The boy's hand still rested on the shaking arm. "It's your chance! I'll go with you."

There was another silence. A shrill cry rose on the wind, the cry of a man in deadly peril. Number Five shook. Carson persisted, keeping his steady hand on the man's arm.

"We'll take the light skiff, sir. Come on!"

"All right," was the dull response. "We can row part way and see —"

They ran unnoticed through the crowd that was trampling by to where the light skiff was swung up. In silence they lowered it and Kit took the oars

while the surfman steered. They were instantly caught in the tide and Kit said earnestly: "I'm not strong enough to row against this current."

Huddleston quickly took the oars and pulled mightily across. A huge swell sullenly lifted them and let them fall. On the crest of the next one Kit caught the lights and cried: "I still see them. I'll make for the eddy and we can get in there."

There was partial moonlight and Kit managed to catch the little smooth space that marked a small inlet giving from the channel and running close up to the jetty. He saw Huddleston turn his head constantly over his shoulder and ease up on the oars.

"Row harder!" Kit commanded.

"We can't make it! It's all we can ever do to get out of this ourselves!"

The boy leaned forward and shouted his last cry to the man's heart:

"My father would have gone! My father would go!"

With a terrific pull the stout surfman forced the skiff over the next wave, which broke with a roar as soon as it was past, whirled the light craft into the eddy, almost lifted it by main strength into the shallows, leaped out, caught Kit in his arms and plunged on towards the dark shadow that marked the jetty.

He made it waist-deep in foaming brine. The

slippery, jagged rocks gave neither foot nor hand hold, but Kit scrambled up and held down a slim arm. A moment later they were safe for the moment. Seaward the great ridge of rocks stretched towards a single dim light — the wrecked schooner. And on both sides of that ridge and foaming over it and dashing in thunder along it the breakers were at play.

Huddleston stooped over the boy. There was a new ring in his voice.

"Carson, stay here. The only rope I've got is the line around my waist, but maybe I can do something. I'm going to try. Stay here. It's ebb tide and in a couple of hours you can get ashore easily."

The surfman climbed up on a broken spile-end, ducked his head to the spray from a breaker and vanished on the other side.

In the crevice where he stood between two massive rocks Kit smiled, careless of the water that boiled to his waist and poured down from above. It didn't matter now whether Number Five came back living or a corpse. Huddleston had taken his chance.

And yet —

The question would not answer itself. It was the great question.

How far would Huddleston go? Would he stop and be found crouching in safety next morning? Would he go all the way?

Kit clambered up and managed to catch a glimpse of the light still dimly marking the dying *Condor*. He drew a long breath and started to work his way towards that poor signal for help.

It took the Government many years of disheartening labour to build the two jetties that confine the channel of the Yaquina river between their unyielding walls. Time and again the labour of hundreds of men and many months was swept away in a night. At last they built the work of huge rocks quarried out of the mountains. These, of such mass as to be impossible to handle under ordinary circumstances, they dumped one by one in a long line across the shoals and out into the sea. Even these had often been moved and upturned and sometimes washed away. There were gaps here and there. The strongest man would find a mile of such climbing almost beyond his strength. To-night there was the added peril of being ground to pieces between moving masses, of being swept off and into the seething maelstrom on either side, of being caught and drowned without even the opportunity for a cry.

Kit persevered. Now he clung like a limpet to some jagged edge to allow a whitening sea to wash over him. Now he crouched in a hollow and took breath for the blind leap upwards to the next. His shoes were torn. His clothes were in rags. A hundred scratches burned with the salt settling in

them. But whenever he saw the light he kept on with fresh energy.

He came on Huddleston before he had gone a hundred yards. The surfman was crouched down in a comparatively sheltered place, a mere dark lump in the spume-shot dusk.

Kit struck him on the shoulder. "Come on!"

The surfman croaked: "Can't be done."

"The light's still burning. Come on!"

The man rose and shook his head. His sou'-wester had been wrenched off his head. There was a gash over one eye. But something within him responded. He started on.

So they toiled and struggled and fought their way another hundred yards. Some freak of the sea had here abandoned as unworthy of its power a single trestle of spiles. The surfman clung to one and stared at the boy beside him. He wiped the blood out of his eyes with his ragged sleeve.

"You stay here," he said wearily.

"And you'll go on?"

Huddleston looked at the slim moon riding in the sky and then down at his companion. He laughed. "I'll go," he said. "You stay here. I can't answer for *two* Carsons. I'll go."

An hour later Kit clambered up high enough to see the light. It was gone. He couldn't discern anything that marked the wreck's position. But the tide was ebbing fast and the waves no longer

washed up over his shelter. There was nothing to do but wait till the moon set and noted the hour of low water. Se he crouched down and shivered.

When the last wave had been gone a half-hour he climbed down on the sand and slowly started towards South Spit, marked by a dim light. He knew that he would have to wade sometimes and possibly swim. But the danger was past. It was very dark and he had only the light to guide him. He was so tired that it seemed as if no muscle in his body would respond to his will. He was sick and faint. But somehow he dully felt that it had been worth while.

When he at last stumbled among weeds in soft sand he knew that he was beyond water-mark and lay down. It would be daylight at six and then he could walk to the launch-landing and go home. Having settled this in his mind he curled up and went to sleep.

The next afternoon Keeper Evans sat in his chair at his desk in the front room of the keeper's house and listened to a battered man who was speaking through plastered lips.

"It was this way," said the skipper of the *Condor*. "We bumped a little and jarred off the wheel just as we crossed the last bad place. It was a strong ebb and we couldn't sail in. We got both anchors over and the cables parted when they

took hold. That ended us, I knew. I thought maybe I could swing her to the north side and get a boat over. But things went too quick for us. A sea wracked the small boat away and gave us a shove to the south'ard. Tide did the rest. We were over there off South Jetty in five minutes. I'd seen you out there at that steamer and I says to the crew: 'Boys, it's all off with us. And they couldn't fetch us anyway if they were here.'

"We lay off the rocks about fifty feet, I should say, and it was certainly going over us and running up on the jetty and —' Stick to her while she lasts,' says I.

"She was a good packet, captain, and she lasted pretty well. Lay over and let the seas smash her and still held together. And then in the moonlight who sh'd we see but a big fellow standing on one of the rocks and shouting. How he got there I don't know. But there he was. And he threw that heaving line of his a dozen times and then we got it and bent on a good strong rope and he pulled that over and made it fast to a spile that was sticking out.

"That's how we came over to the jetty, all but the engineer. He was badly hurt when the wheel dropped and his engines jumped on him. I tried to fix him some way so that I could take him but I couldn't. So I said: 'Perkins, I'll try for the rocks and when I yell you tie the rope around your

waist and under your shoulders and we'll haul you across.'

"I don't know how I got across myself. I was bashed up against the rocks and they pulled me out knocked silly. So I couldn't tell them about the engineer and how to fetch him. Your surfman found out that Perkins was there and he just told the boys to hang on where they were till the moon set and the tide was out and they could make it to shore some way. Then he jumped into that — that mess and went for the wreck."

The captain of the schooner was silent.

"How long did the wreck hold after the surfman went overboard to try for it?" inquired the keeper, gently.

"The crew say about ten minutes."

"Then you feel sure that there was no chance for him to save your engineer?" came the sharp question.

The *Condor's* skipper looked his surprise. "Certainly not, captain."

"And you are perfectly assured that everything was done that could be done under the circumstances, captain?"

"I've just told you that I never expected to get off the schooner," was the response. "I think that surfman did a miracle." He thought a moment. "He was the nerviest fellow ever *I* saw, and I've seen some."

"And in your report you will state that you attach no blame to Surfman Huddleston for not saving the engineer?"

Once more the battered skipper looked amazed. "Why yes, of course. What do you ask such questions as that for? Didn't the man save all of us he could when no one would have ever thought a mortal could get one of us? What do you want to be so particular for?"

"Every man in this service must not only do much but all that he can," said the keeper quietly. "I wasn't there. I am going to be absolutely sure that no one will ever say that one of my crew didn't do *all* he could."

The wrecked captain nodded. "I reckon none of *us* will say anything but that."

"By the way, captain," the keeper went on, "you picked a boy up lying on the beach, didn't you?"

"Yes. Looked as if he'd been pretty badly shipwrecked himself."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing except he seemed anxious to get back home." The battered man chuckled in spite of himself. "And I didn't blame him."

"Did he say anything more?"

"Not a word."

"Didn't say how he happened to be there?"

"No, sir. Just kind of suggested that his mother might be worrying about him," said the *Condor's*

captain. "Say, you haven't any word about that surfman, have you?"

"Yes."

"I'm glad he turned up all right," said the other simply. "I'd like to thank him."

Captain Evans nodded curtly. "I'll show you his house," he said.

Mrs. Carson opened the door for the two captains. A quiet glance passed between the keeper and the widow of Number Four. "The captain would like to thank Huddleston," he muttered.

"In there," said Mrs. Carson in a low voice, opening the door.

On the lounge of the little room lay Surfman Number Five, his bruised face turned towards the wife he would never see again. Mrs. Huddleston did not look up.

In the stillness the *Condor's* captain crushed his borrowed cap between his battered hands. He coughed slightly and then muttered, "He was a brave man, sir."

They passed out and left Number Five in his last sleep.

In the little yard a youth was busily engaged in splitting firewood.

"Why, that's the kid we picked up asleep over there this morning," gasped the schooner's master. "His son?"

"No, son of one of my men that was lost several

months ago," was the keeper's answer. "I'll tell Mrs. Evans to fix up a place for you at my house, captain. See you later."

When they were alone Keeper Evans said, "Kit, did you go over with Number Five last night?"

"Just rowed him across, sir."

"Got upset?"

"Yes, sir."

The keeper brushed his beard thoughtfully. "Your father was a very good man, Kit."

The boy straightened himself up and smiled. "You just bet he was. He'd have gone, too!"

And once again the eternal silence that keeps the pride and affection and strength of the Life Saving Service from all knowledge of the outside world fell over the secret of Surfman Huddleston.

NIGHT TIDES

IT was the middle of October and from Yachats on the south to Tillamook on the north the Indians were making prayer to heaven. Kiota Rock in the Siletz was covered with flowers, new hats, silver coins, ribbons, knives and good leather belts — offerings to the gods that guide the salmon on their yearly migration up the streams that empty into the Pacific. And still there were no salmon. The canneries swarmed with idle Chinese labourers, the cannery tenders nosed their moorings uselessly, and for one hundred miles of coast two thousand families faced the prospect of a winter's famine.

Every vessel that crossed any of the bars was boarded by men anxiously inquiring whether the "fish" had been sighted. None had seen them. For the first time in forty years the ocean's laws were violated, the great laws that rule the fish.

Wild Bill passed the news to Tim Culver. "Big potlatch up at Siletz this week. All the Indians are going to make sacrifice and see whether they can't bring the salmon in."

"What are they going to do?" the boy asked sceptically.

"Fix a big feast and send it out across the bar so that the fish'll know they'll be well treated," said the packer. "Never saw the Indians so worried in my life."

"What day'll all this happen?"

"Night of the full moon tide," Wild Bill answered.

Tim conveyed the news to the scouts at the cabin.

"Piffle," said Bobcat Spencer, tousling his red hair.

"Rot."

"Heathen!"

"Never had any sense, anyway," remarked Tad Sheldon. "What good will that do? What we need is a good rain to swell the streams. Then they'll come."

"We've had rain, Tad."

"Well, more rain, then."

Young Robinson turned a somersault and then stood on his hands. "What'll The Kid do?" he demanded through purple lips.

"Now the "kid" was a new member of the boy scouts, the son of a widow and an object of anxious interest to all, for his mother had put her last savings into a little plot of ground on the hill back of Jumpoff Joe. The Kid had built thereon a one-room cabin, and now there was no money for either The Kid or his mother unless the boy scouts' plans went through.

They had spent two months in perfecting those plans. They had enlisted Sullivan, the fish-buyer; they had arranged their own skiff for fishing and in some way or another had got hold of a hundred fathoms of aged net, over which they had toiled for weeks. All was complete now, to the last sinker and float; from the net-tub to the gaff-hooks; from the leg-o'-mutton sail to the big oars; from the lanterns to the anchors.

And no fish! And the steelheads had never been later than the fifth of October!

"I hope those Indians make a success of it," Tad said, pursing his lips thoughtfully. "You know they *do* know a lot about fish and so on."

"Lot of good that potlatch will do."

"Full moon tide," Culver repeated slowly. "Say, that's to-morrow night."

"All right, old Almanac," Robinson said irreverently. "Then it's up to us to be on hand. I know that none of the fishermen are going out here till the day after that."

Tad was still thoughtful. "I tell you, fellows," he said presently, "we might's well drop over to Hansen's scow that night and be *ready*."

"They'll laugh at us."

"The fish are always reported from sea several days before they come in."

"That's all well and good," Sheldon replied with perfect good humour. "The laugh will be on the

other people if the fish should come in and we were there. I don't see as we ought to pass up any chances to square The Kid."

"That's right," said Carson. "He and his mother need that money."

"And it'll be a lark," agreed Spencer. "What time'll we start?"

"High tide is at midnight," Culver announced.

"We ought to start our drift at Mill Four," Tad suggested.

"Six miles up. Better get started from the scow about ten and go up with the tide," said Robinson.

"Then we'll leave here at eight. That'll give us plenty of time to get over to the other place and get everything ready."

"Better keep our mouths closed," growled Spencer.

"Sure," Tad agreed. "If there are no fish, we shan't be laughed at. If there are, nobody else will be out. I'll get The Kid and tell him we'll just help him his first night. You know he wouldn't stand for too much babying."

It was dark alongshore when the boys lowered away their skiff into the water, but the bay itself lay a shimmering sheet of silver.

"You're in luck, Kid," Tad muttered. "Not a soul out."

"I stopped and asked Sullivan to-night about going out," said Spencer. "He pooh-poohed the no-

tion; said nobody would waste their time and muscle till the fish were reported outside. *Pelican* came in this afternoon and said nary fish to be seen."

"It doesn't seem right for you fellows to take all this trouble for nothing," the Kid put in. "You've —"

"Aw, shut up," said Culver. "This is a lark. Come on!"

They pulled slowly across to South Spit, and then up into the cove, where their houseboat lay, a present to them from a captain who went to sea again in his own ship and had left his friends, the scouts, this to remember him by.

Once on board this Tad insisted that all the gear in the big skiff be overhauled again. Satisfied that everything was as right as right could be, the boys loafed around in the bright moonlight for a half-hour. Finally Culver said, "Suppose we start on up, Kid? Tide's making fast. Might as well go up with it and save rowing."

So they pushed out and made slowly for the light at the head of the Upper Sands. Then they turned their boat's prow for the lights of the railroad wharf three miles above.

"Great night!" said Culver. "Moon's as big as a barrel and yellow as gold."

"S-h-h," whispered Young Robinson, pointing inshore towards a long shoal at the foot of the hill over which the moon was rising.

"What is it?" Tad demanded.

"Boat pulling up towards the railroad wharf. Bet it's a fisherman!"

"Can't see now," said Culver practically. "But we'll be able to tell who it is in a little while, just as soon as he gets out of the shadow."

"There's only one fisherman lives in there," said Bobcat Spencer, in some excitement. "That's old Miché, the Yachats Indian chief. D'ye s'pose it could be him?"

"Say, if it *is*," Tad responded, "you sure picked out a good night, Kid. He is the wisest old guy on the Pacific Coast — about a hundred years old, never gets into his boat without knowing that there's good fishing. Let's see. Pull over towards him, fellows."

The skiff turned slightly and skipped along the reflected moonlight. There was no sound except the gentle slap of the water along the bows and an occasional soft splash of a wave inshore. Suddenly from far up the dark hill came a shrill cry, plangent and mysterious.

"Wonder what that is?" whispered The Kid.

Tad grinned broadly. "You *are* in luck," he announced in a low voice. "That's a wildcat's hunting call and that's old Chief Miché in the boat over there."

The Kid looked puzzled.

"They're both after fish," Spencer explained.

"But there are all sorts here always!"

"Nobody, even the animals, makes any fuss about any fish except salmon," Tad explained.

"I haven't heard one jump," Carson put in.

"Time enough," said Tad. Then, bethinking himself that he was getting enthusiastic on rather unstable grounds, he added, "Of course we may get skunked. But we'll have tried."

An hour after this they had passed the railroad wharf and the big steam-schooner *Pelican* asleep beside it and were in the dense shadow of the high peak that rimmed the right-angled curve of the river into the long stretch that reached straight away inland. As they swung into this Tad gave an exclamation. The moon rode directly over this long glittering sheet of water, and it marked out every channel stake, eddy and bit of driftwood with startling distinctness. Far to the right they saw the densely set stakes that outlined the oyster-beds.

"That's fine, isn't it?" assented the Kid. "Gee, fishing'll be fine fun."

"'Twon't always be like this."

"Pull harder, fellows," Tad ordered. "The tide's slacking and we want to have as long a drift as possible. You see, Kid, the tide has come up just as we do. If it's high on the bar at midnight, it won't be high here till two o'clock. The fish come into the river on the flood tide mostly, and by putting out your net about now or a little later we'll

catch those coming in. Then we have an ebb-tide to fetch us back home."

Half an hour more and Tad stood up and peered about them. Presently he sat down. "Old Chief Miché is inshore. There's not another boat out. I guess we'd better throw our net out, too. We'll clear Old Miché all right from where we are."

"Look here, Tad," said Culver, "if there are any fish here to-night, he's got us 'corked.'"

"Can't help. That's the rule of the river."

"What's 'corked'?" demanded the Kid.

"When you set your net ahead of another man's so that you get the fish instead of him, that's corking him," Culver explained. "You'll understand when the net's out."

Under Tad's directions the boys fell on the great, heavy, brown gill-net that lay piled high in the tub and proceeded to pay it slowly out, while Tad told the Kid why they took it up in their arms instead of their hands, and instructed him how to keep the corks that floated it clear of the leads that weighed down the lower side.

The net dropped into the water a fathom at a time and floated off as Culver slowly rowed the skiff away from it. Presently it lay for a couple of hundred feet across the current, and Tad gave orders to stop for the time being.

"Now light your lantern, Kid," he said, "and set it where it will show brightly all around."

"Aw no!" pleaded Spencer. "The minute people see that they'll know somebody's drifting and they'll start, too."

"That may be true," Tad replied. "But it's the law, and the rule of the river, besides."

"The old chief hasn't got his out."

"That doesn't matter to us," Tad insisted. "Suppose a launch came along and ran into the net? It would destroy The Kid's property and very likely foul the launch's propeller as well."

"Now what do we do?" The Kid asked.

"Wait."

"Just wait."

"That's all. It's the biggest part of fishing. Say, Robinson, you might brew us a pot of Java."

This done over the little oil-stove, the boys disposed themselves as comfortably as possible in the boat and settled down for several hours of nothing to do. But The Kid was worried. The whole affair was so new to him that he could not see that there *was* nothing to do. He listened to the boys' explanations of the channel, of the lights he must always keep in sight, but continually inquired whether there was no way of luring the salmon.

"I knew a fellow that fished on the Alsea that time three years ago when every boat made big catches every drift," murmured Spencer. "And he came in with a clean boat every last time."

"Why?" demanded The Kid.

"Because he always thought some other fellow had the best of him," Bobcat went on. "He'd just get his net out when he'd see Sorenson or Indian Joe or Butterfield drifting in another part of the river, and he'd pull his net and go over to try there. Of course he never caught a fish."

Midnight came and passed. The moon shining from the zenith seemed to make even the depths clear and lucid. It illuminated an oysterman tonging far inshore and lifted the old Indian's boat, so to speak, till it seemed to float on moonlight. Tad had been looking anxiously at Old Miché and shook his head several times.

"He hasn't set his net at all," he said, disgustedly. "Not a cork in sight."

"He's anchored there," said Culver.

Just then there was a splash out in the river and the boys with one accord stirred.

"Fish?" asked Spencer.

"Dunno."

"Wait. It'll leap again if it was."

Almost with the words came the sound of a second splash.

"The old boy's setting his net!" cried Tad. "Boy, I believe we are in luck."

"S-sure," muttered Young Robinson, pointing outward. "There's the good sign!"

"What is it?"

"A seal."

"That's right, I remember," Culver said quickly. "That's the old chief's sign. I'd forgot. I don't remember the Siwash for it, but it means '*Waits-for-Seal.*'"

"He saw it before we did, that's right," Tad agreed. "Say, these Indians are wonders, aren't they?"

"How'll we know when we get some fish?" inquired The Kid anxiously.

"In this kind of water you might tell once in a while, but ordinarily you don't know till you haul your net."

"Are you going to overhaul, Tad?" asked Culver.

"What's that mean?" said The Kid.

"Means that when you've your whole net out you cast loose from it and haul it over your boat from one end to the other, picking the fish out as you go. We better wait a while before we cast the whole of it."

Young Robinson, who was sitting in the stern with one hand on the net, looked up with a queer smile. "I say, Tad, there's *something* in the net."

"Might be a cod or a bull-head or a dog-fish," said Tad calmly. "Is it right close to the boat?"

"I feel it struggling."

"Then haul her in, boys, and we'll see what we've got."

A moment later Tad quietly reached for the gaff

and jerked it inboard. A three-foot salmon leaped in the box. Spencer methodically killed it with the club and glanced at Tad.

"The fish have come," Tad said, grinning. "Out with the net, fellows!"

Even as they worked they noticed that the Indian below them had lit his lantern. When the last fathom was out Tad looked at his watch. "Now or never," he said. "Tide's about to set down. This might be only a few fish or it might be —"

He said no more. Out of the water not a dozen feet down-river from the net a shining silvery body slipped out of the water and fell with a splash.

"We got *him,*" cried Spencer.

"Gee!" whispered Culver, looking downstream, "we sure have struck it, fellows. Look!"

The moonlit surface seemed splintered into a thousand facets by leaping fish. The sound of their plashing filled the air with gentle sound.

"Silversides *and* steelheads," Tad murmured. "Well, fish is fish. We'll overhaul, fellows."

At this work they relayed each other, for it was back-breaking work to lift the heavy net, corks, leads and all, in at one side and let it go at the other. Tad kept the gaff busy while The Kid took his first lessons in finding out how to keep the sinkers from falling through the meshes and snarling things up. When they reached the other end of the net all were exhausted. But thirty fair fish lay in the box.

They overhauled three times and then made Tad give the order to take the net in. By this time the ebbing tide had carried them down to the bend and the Indian's boat had vanished.

With the net well stowed and sixty salmon to show for their night's work they rowed past the railroad wharf and down the bay towards home. It was still dark when they pulled alongside Sullivan's receiving scow, but the fish-buyer's lantern was lit and they saw him busily lifting fish from a boat that lay just ahead of them.

"Old Miché," said Tad. "Say, Mr. Sullivan, are you buying fish this morning?"

The buyer stopped in his tally and peered over. "Snakes!" he exclaimed. "Were you boys out? Well, of all the things!"

When he had finished his tally of the old Indian's fish Sullivan came over and stared down into the full fish-box. The dripping boys smiled up at him.

"How did *you* find out that the salmon were running?"

They grinned more broadly than ever.

"Well," Sullivan said, "pass 'em up."

When all were tallied and weighed the buyer inquired who was the seller.

"The Kid here," Tad responded promptly. "This is his boat and gear. We just went along to keep him company."

The old Indian poked his wrinkled visage into the little circle lit by the lantern. His old eyes glanced from one to another. "Huh!" he grunted. "How many?"

"Sixty, Miché," Sullivan answered.

The chief turned to Tad. "You hear cat?"

"Yes."

"You give cat one fish?"

"No. What for?"

The old fellow wrinkled his dim eyes. "What for? Wildcat give boat luck. Give wildcat fish."

"Up to you, Kid," laughed Culver.

"I believe I'll do it," said The Kid. "But where'll I put it?"

The old chief took The Kid's hand and stooped over the box. "Pick good fish," he commanded.

The Kid lifted up the biggest by its gills and looked foolish, as he stood among the amused boys. But the Indian seemed deadly serious. Muttering to himself he took The Kid's handkerchief from around his neck, tore it into two pieces and tied each piece through a gill.

"Now throw," he said gravely.

The Kid swung the heavy fish up and let it go. It soared out of the light of the lantern. They heard the splash of it in the water.

"A dollar out of your pocket, son," said the buyer curtly.

But the old Indian paid no attention to this.

"You called now '*Listen-for-Cat.* Each tide you go out, give big fish to mountain cat."

"Well," said Tad, breaking the awkward silence, "You've lost your name, Spencer. The Kid's name is '*Listen-for-Cat.*' We may have to call you 'Cat' for short, Kid, but — I guess the Indian's right. Let's go home."

While they were stowing the boat Spencer, to show no ill-feeling at losing his title, asked amiably, "How much did that robber pay you, Cat?"

"Eighteen dollars and a half."

"Do as well every tide and you'll have a few hundreds soon," said Tad. "Well, so long, fellows."

"Say," said The Cat awkwardly, "any time you fellows want fish, you know you just say so."

"All right," said the boys.

And the newly-christened Listen-to-Cat went on alone, whistling. On the hill as he neared the little cabin he had built for his mother his whistle was answered by a shrill cry from the forest.

"Mother's always thought it was bad luck," he thought to himself. "Now I'll tell her it's good luck."

He jingled the coins in his pocket as he opened the door.

TAD SHELDON, SECOND-CLASS SCOUT

"THERE is no har-rm in the story, though it speaks ill for us big people with Misther to our names," said Chief Engineer Mickey O'Rourke, balancing his coffee cup between his two scarred hands. "Ye remimber the lasht toime I was on leave — and I wint down to Yaquina Bay with Captain Tyler on his tin gas schooner, thinkin' to mesilf it was a holiday — and all the fun I had was insthructin' the gasoline engineer in the mysteries of how to expriss one's sintimints without injurin' the skipper's feelin's? Well, I landed in the bay and walked about in the woods, which is foine for the smell of thim which is like fresh tar; and one afternoon I find two legs and small feet stickin' out of a hole under a stump. I pulled on the two feet and the legs came out and at the end of thim a bhoy, mad with rage and dirt in his eyes.

"'Ye have spoiled me fun!' says he, lookin' at me very fierce.

"'Do yez dig yer fun out of the ground like coal?' I demands.

"'I'm investigatin' the habits of squirrels,' says

he. 'I must find out how a squirrel turns round in his hole. Does he turn a summersault or stick his tail between his ears and go over backward?'

"'He turns inside out, like an ould sock,' I informs him, and he scorns me natural history. On the strength of mutual language we get acquainted. He is Tad Sheldon, the eldest son of Surfman No. 1 of the life-saving crew. He is fourteen years ould. Me bould Tad has troubles of his own, consisting of five other youngsters who are his gang. 'We are preparing to inter the ranks of the Bhoy Scouts,' he tells me, settin' be the side of the squirrel-hole. 'We are all tenderfeet and we can't get enlisted with the rest of the bhoys in the United States because each scout must have a dollar in the bank and between the six of us we have only one dollar and six bits and that's in me mother's apron pocket and in no bank at all.'

"'Explain,' says I.

"''Tis this way,' says me young sprig. 'All the bhoys in the country of America have joined the scouts, which is an army of felleys that know the woods and about animals and how to light a fire, and know the law.'

"'Stop!' I orders. 'No one knows the law without gold in one hand and a book in the other. If ye knew the law ye would have yer dollar.'

"''Tis the scouts' law,' says he. 'It tells ye to obey yer superiors and be fair to animals and kind

to people ye care little for. Ye must know how to take care of yourself anywhere and be ready whin the counthry needs ye.'

"'And ye need a dollar?' I asks. 'Thin, why not work for it and stop pokin' yer nose down squirrel-holes, where there is neither profit nor wages?'

"'Because I'm to be the patrol-leader and I must know more than me men,' he retorts.

"Now, ye remimber I had in me pocket three pay checks, besides the money of Mr. Lof, the second engineer, which I had got for him and was carryin' about to send to him by the first friend I saw. So I took off me cap and pulled out one of the checks and said: 'Me bould boy, go down to the town and get the cash for this. Bring it back to me and I'll give ye a dollar; and thin ye can become a scout.'

"The lad looked at me and then at the governmint check. He shook his head till the dirt rolled into his ears, for he was still full of the clods he had rubbed into himsilf in the hole. 'I can't take a dollar from a man in the service,' he says. 'I must earn it.'

"'The Governmint's money is clane,' I rebukes him. 'I'm ould and me legs ends just above me feet, so that I walk with difficulty. 'Tis worth a dollar to get the coin without trampin'.'

"'I will earn it from somebody not in the service,' says me bould bhoy, with great firmness.

"'I'm no surfman, thank Hivin!' I remarks. "'I'm in the establishmint and look down on ye.'

"'If I'd known ye were a lighthouse man I'd have taken all ye had at first,' he retorts. 'But ye have made me a fair offer and I forgive ye. My father works for his living.'

"'Well,' says I, seein' that it was poor fortune to be quarrelin' with a slip of a kid, 'do yez want the dollar or not?'

"And at that we got down to fact and he explained that this scout business was most important. It appeared that the other five bhoys depinded on him to extricate thim from their difficulties and set them all up as scouts, with uniforms and knives and a knowledge of wild animals and how to build a fire in a bucket of watther. We debated the thing back and forth till the sun dropped behind the trees and the could air came up from the ground and stuck me with needles of rheumatism.

"The lad was a good lad, and he made plain to me why his dollar was har-rd to get. He had thought of savin' the life of a summer visitor, but the law read that he must save life anyhow, without lookin' for pay. 'And we can't all save lives,' he mourns; 'for some of the kids is too young.'

"'But ye must earn money, ye scut,' I says. 'Ye're fourteen and whin I was that age I was me mother's support and joy. I made four shillin's a wake mixin' plaster for a tile-layer.'

"'I work,' he responds dolefully. 'But it goes to me mother to put with the savings in the bank against the time me father will be drownded, and leave us without support, for ye must know that we life-savers gent no pensions.'

"'I niver hear-rd of a life-saver bein' drownded,' I remarks. 'But it may be, for I see ye are of an exthra-ordinary family and anything may come to such. How many are there of yez?'

"'There are six of us childher, all gur-rls but mesilf,' says he, with rage in his voice. 'And Carson — he was No. 4 — broke his hip in a wreck last year and died of the bruise and left five, which the crew is lookin' after. Young Carson is one of me gang and makes a dollar and four bits a week deliverin' clams to the summer folks. Ye see he can't save a dollar for the bank.' And we got up and discussed the matther going down the hill toward the town. Before we parted Tad tould me where he lived.

"'I'd call on yer father and mother,' says I, 'if I cud be sure they would appreciate the honour. 'Tis a comedown for an officer in the lighthouse establishmint to inter the door of a surfman.'

"'Me father has a kind heart and is good to the ould," he answers me. 'We live beyond the station, on the bluff.'

"With that we went our ways and I ate an imminse meal in the hotel with the dishes all spread

out before me — and a pretty gur-rl behind me shoulder to point out the best of thim. Thin I walked out and started for the house of me bould Tad.

"I found thim all seated in the parlor excipt the missus, who was mixin bread in the kitchen. I inthroduced mesilf, and Sheldon, who had No. 1 on his sleeve, offered me a pipe, which I took. I came down to business, houldin' me cap full of checks and money on me lap. 'Yer bould bhoy wants to be a scout and lacks a dollar,' I says. 'I like his looks, though I discovered him in a hole under a tree. He won't take me money and scorns me and the establishmint.'

"'He must earn it,' he answers, scowlin' over his pipe.

"'But I'll spind it,' I insists, peerin' at the bhoy out of the tail of me eye. 'If yer town weren't dhry I'd have given it to the saloon man for the good of the family he hasn't got. So why bilge at a single dollar?'

"''Tis the scouts' law,' puts in me bould Tad. 'I must make it honestly.' And he settled his head between his hands and gazed reproachfully at the clane floor. So I saved me money and sat till eight o'clock exchangin' complimints with Misther Sheldon. Thin the bell rang on the hill beyond the station and he pulled his cap off the dresser, kissed his wife and the five gur-rls and wint out to his watch

and a good sleep. While he was gone I stood in the doorway and Missus Sheldon tould me of the little Carsons and how Missus Carson had sworn niver to marry again excipt in the life-saving service. 'She says the Governmint took away her husband and her support,' says the good lady, 'and she'll touch no money excipt Governmint checks, bein' used to thim and Uncle Sam owin' her the livin' he took away.'

"'With five childher she shud look up and marry one of the men in the establishmint,' I informs her. 'They are good husbands and make money.'

"'Though a widow, she has pride,' she responds sharply; and I left, with young Tad follerin' at me heels till I let him overtake me and whisper: 'If ye'd buy some clams off of young Carson it wud hep the widow.'

"'I am starved for clams,' I whispers back like a base conspirator for the hand of the lovely gur-rl in the castle. 'Show me the house of me bould Carson.' He pointed to a light through the thin woods.

"They thought I was crazy whin I returned to the hotel with a hundred pounds of clams dripping down me back. 'I dug thim with me own hands this night,' I tould the man in the office. 'Cook thim all for me breakfast.'

"'Ye're a miracle of strength and endurance un-

der watther,' says he; 'for 'tis now high tide and the surf is heavy.'

"'I found their tracks in the road and followed thim to their lair,' I retorts. 'Do I get thim for breakfast?'

"And in the mor-rnin', whin I was that full of clams that I needed a shell instead of a weskit, I walked on the beach with the admirin' crowds of summer tourists and lovely women. It was fine weather and the little ones were barefooted and the old ones bareheaded, and the wind was gentle, and the life-savers were polishin' their boat in full view of the wondherin' throng; and I thought of this ould tub out here on the ind of a chain and pitied thim all. Thin I sthrolled around the point to the bay and found me bould Tad dhrillin' his gang in an ould skiff, with home-made oars in their little fists and Tad sthandin' in the stern-sheets, with a huge steerin' sweep between his arms and much loud language in his mouth. When I appeared they looked at me and Tad swung his boat up to the beach and invited me in. 'We will show you a dhrill ye will remimber,' says he, very polite. And with my steppin' in he thrust the skiff off and the bhoys rowed with tremenjous strength. We wint along a full three knots an hour, till he yelled another ordher and the bhoys dropped their oars and jumped over to one side; and I found mesilf undher the

boat, with me mouth full of salt watther and ropes. Whin I saw the sun again me bould Tad says to me with disapprobation: 'Ye aren't experienced in capsize dhrill.'

"'In the establishment we use boats to keep us out of the watther,' I responds, hunting for the papers out of me cap. 'The newspapers are full of rebukes for thim that rock boats to their own peril.'

"With that they all felt ashamed and picked up me papers and grunted at each other, tryin' to blame somebody else. And whin I had me checks and me papers all safe again I smiled on thim and me bould Tad took heart. ''Tis not to tip the boat over,' says he, 'but to get it back on an even keel after a sea's capsised her — that is the point of the dhrill.' And we pulled ashore to dhry.

"Whiles we were sittin' on the sand drainin' the watther out of our shoes a small, brassy launch came down the bay, with many men and women on her little decks. Me bould Tad looked at her with half-shut eyes and snorted. 'Some day it will be the life-saving crew that must bring those ninnies back to their homes,' he says. 'The Pacific is nothing to fool with in a gasoline launch. 'Tis betther to be safe and buy your fish.' And we watched the launch chug by and out on the bar and to sea. I learned that she was the *Gladys* by name and fetched tourists to the fishing grounds, nine miles down the coast.

" All the bhoys were respictful to me excipt young Carson, who recognised in me bould Mickey the man who had asked for a hundredweight of clams. He stared at me superciliously and refused to have speech with me, bein' ashamed, if I can judge of his his youthful thoughts, of bein' in the same company with a fool.

" But I discovered that the gang was all bent on becomin' what they called second-class scouts, which they made plain to me was betther by one than a terderfoot. But they niver mintioned the lackings of the dollar, bein' gintlemin. They wanted to know of me whether I thought that boatmanship and knowledge of sailing would be accipted be the powers instid of wisdom as to bird-tracks and intimacy with wild animals and bugs. And the heart of me opened, the youth of me came back; and I spoke to thim as one lad to another, with riference to me years in a steamer and the need of hard hands and a hard head.

" The ind of it was that they rolled across the sand to me side and we all lay belly down over a chart, which me bould Tad had procured after the manner of bhoys, and they explained to me how they knew the coast for twelve miles each side of Yaquina Bay, with the tides and currents all plain in their heads. And I was surprised at what the young scuts knew — God save thim!

" At noon the visitors suddenly stopped lookin'

at the scenery and hastened away with hunger in their eyes. The crew ran the surfboat back into the station and the bhoys drew their skiff up out of har-rm's way; and I wint back to me hotel and more clams. On the steps I found young Carson, grinnin' like a cat.

"'Ye don't have to eat thim shell fish,' says he, lookin' away. 'Gimme the sack of thim and I'll peddle thim to the tourists and bring ye the money.'

"'Whisht and away with ye!' I commanded. 'Who are you to be dictatin' the diet of yer betthers?' And he fled, without glancin' behind him.

"There was some remar-rks passed upon me wet clothes, but I tould the clerk in the office that me duty often called me to get drippin' soaked and went into the dinin'-room with a stiff neck under me proud chin. There were but few in the place and the gur-rl stood by me shoulder to pilot me through the various coorses infor-rmed me that the most of the guests were out on the *Gladys* fishin'. 'And the most of thim will have little appetite for their dinners,' she mused gently, thereby rebukin' me for a second helpin' of the fresh meat.

"In the afternoon I sthrolled out on the beach again, but saw little. A heavy fog was rowlin' from the nor'ard and the breeze before it was chill and damp as a widow's bed. I walked for me health for an hour and then ran to kape war-rm. At the ind of my spurt I was amazed to find mesilf

exactly at the hotel steps. I wint in and laid me down be the fire and slept. I woke to hear a woman wailin'.

"Whin me eyes were properly open, and both pointed in the same direction, I found mesilf in the midst of a crowd. The sittin'-room was full of people, all with misery in their faces. The woman whose cries had woke me was standin' be the windey, with one hand around a handkerchief. 'My God!' she was sayin'—'My God. And me bhoy is on that boat!' And I knew that it was throuble and that many people would have their heads in their hands that night, with aches in their throats. I got up — shoes in me hand. At sight of me bright unifor-rm ten men flung themselves on me. 'You will help save them?' they cried at me.

"'I will so soon as I get me shoes on,' I remar-rked, pushing them off me toes. I put on me boots and stood up. 'Now I'll save thim,' says I. 'Where are they?'

"'They're on the *Gladys,*' says three at once. 'Thirty of our people — women and men and childher.'

"'Why wake me?' I demanded crosslike. 'Aren't the brave life-savers even now sitting be the fire waitin' for people to come and be saved? I'm a chief engineer in the lighthouse establishmint and we save no lives excipt whin we can't help it. Get the life-saving crew.'

"And they explained to me bould Mickey that the crew was gone twenty miles up the coast to rescue the men on a steam schooner that was wrecked off the Siletz, word of it having come down but two hours since. They looked at me unifor-rm and demanded their relatives at me hands. I shoved them away and wint out to think. In the prociss it occurred to me that the *Gladys* might not be lost. I wint back and asked thim how they knew it was time to mourn. 'If that launch is ashore they are as close to the fire as they can get,' I tould thim. 'And if she has gone down 'tis too late to dhry their stockings.'

"'She is lost in the fog,' I was infor-rmed. She shud have been back at her wharf at four o'clock. 'Twas now turned six and the bar was rough and blanketed in mist. The captain of the harbour tug had stated, with wise shakes of the head, that the *Gladys* cud do no more than lay outside the night and wait for sunshine and a smooth crossing. I shoved thim away from me again and wint out to think.

"It was a mur-rky fog, that sort that slathers over the watther like thick oil. Beyond the hill I cud hear the surf pounding like a riveter in a boiler. Overhead was a sheet of grey cloud, flying in curds before the wind, and in me mouth was the taste of the deep sea, blown in upon me with the scent of the storm. Two words with the skipper of the tug

tould me the rest. 'It's coming on to blow a little from the south-ard,' said me bould mariner. 'It's so thick the *Gladys* can't find her way back. Her passengers will be cold and hungry whin they retur-rn in the mor-rnin'.'

"'And will ye not go after thim?'

"'I can't,' says he. 'Me steamer is built for the bay and one sea on the bar wud destroy the investmint. The life-saving crew is up north after a wreck.'

"'Is there no seagoin' craft in this harbour?' I demands.

"'There is not,' says he. 'Captain Tyler took his gas schooner down the coast yesterday.'

"So I sat down and thought, wonderin' how I cud sneak off me unifor-rm and have peace. For I knew me brass buttons wud keep me tongue busy all night explainin' that I was not a special providence paid by the Governmint to save fools from purgat-ry. In me thoughts I heard a wor'rd in me ear. I looked up. 'Twas me bould Tad, with a gang clustherin' at his heels.

"'Ye have followed the sea for many years?' says he.

"'I have followed it whin it was fair weather,' I responded, 'but the most of the time the sea has chased me ahead of it. Me coattail is still wet from the times it caught me. Speak up! What is it?'

" The bhoy pulled out of his jacket his ould chart and laid it before me. 'The *Gladys* is at anchor off these rocks,' says he, layin' a small finger on a spot. 'And in this weather she will have to lie there as long as she can. Whin it blows she must up anchor and get out or go ashore here.' He moved his finger a mite and it rested on what meant rocks.

" 'Well,' I remar-rks.

" 'Me father and all the bhoys' fathers are gone up north to rescue the crew of a steam schooner that's wrecked. Before they get back it will be too late. I thought —'

" 'What were ye thinkin', ye scut?' says I fiercely.

" He dropped one foot on the other and looked me between the eyes. 'I was thinkin' we wud go afther her and save her,' says he, very bould.

" I cast me eyes over the bunch of little felleys and laughed. But me bould Tad didn't wink. 'There's people out there drownding,' says he. 'We've dhrilled and we know all the ropes; but we can't pull our skiff across the bar and the big boat is not for us, bein' the keeper's orders. And we haven't the weight to pull it anyhow. And he stared me out of me laugh.

" 'There's no seagoin' craft in the harbour,' I says, to stop his nonsinse.

" 'There is another launch,' he remar-rks casually.

"We looked at each other and he thin says: 'Can ye run a gasoline engine?'

"'I have had to,' I infor-rms him, 'but I dislike the smell.'

"'The owner of this launch is not here,' says me young sprig. 'And he niver tould us not to take it. If you'll run the engine we'll be off and rescue the folks on the *Gladys!*'

"Be the saints! I laughed to kill mesilf, till the little brat up and remar-rks to the gang: 'These lighthouse officers wear a unifor-rm and have no wor-rkin' clothes at all, not needin' thim in their business.'

"So I parleyed with thim a momint to save me face. 'And how will ye save thim that's dyin' in deep watthers?'

"'By to-morrow nobody can cross the bar,' I'm infor-rmed. 'And the skipper of the *Gladys* don't know this coast. We'll just pick him up and pilot him in.'

"'But the bar!' I protests. 'It's too rough to cross a launch inwardbound, even if ye can get out.'

"'I know the soft places,' says the little sprig of a bhoy, very proudly. 'Come on.'

"'And if I don't come?' I inquired.

"He leaned over and touched the brass buttons on me jacket. 'Ye have sworn to do your best,' says he. 'I've not had a chance to take me oath yet as a second-class scout, but between ourselves

we have done so. I appeal to yez as one man to another.'

"I got up. 'I niver expicted to serve undher so small a captain,' I remar-rks, 'but that is neither here nor there. Where is that gasoline engine?'

"We stepped proudly off in the dusk, me bould Tad houldin' himsilf very straight beside me and the gang marchin' at our heels shouldher to shouldher. Prisintly we came to a wharf, and ridin' to the float below it was a big white launch, cabined and decked. Tad jumped down and the gang folleyed. Thin I lowered mesilf down with dignity and intered the miserable engine room.

"I have run every sort of engine and machine made by experts and other ignoramuses. I balk at nothing. The engine was new to me, but I lit a lantern and examined its inwards with anxiety and superciliousness. Prisintly, by the grace of God, it started off. A very small bhoy held the lantern for me while I adjusted the valves and the carbureter, and this bould lad infor-rmed me with pride that the 'leader' had assigned him to me as my engine-room crew. And whin the machine was revolvin' with some speed that individual thrust his head in at the door to ask me if I was ready. 'If ye are,' says that limb of wickedness, 'we will start, chief.'

"'Ye may start any time,' I says, with great respict. 'But whin we'll stop is another matther.'

"'Ye must keep her goin' whiles we cross the bar,' he infor-rms me, with a straight look.

"The little gong rang and I threw in the clutch and felt the launch slide away. The jingle came and I opened her up. 'Twas a powerful machine and whin I felt the jerk and pull of her four cylinders I sint me assistant to find the gasoline tank and see whether we had oil enough. Thinks I, if this machine eats up fuel like this we must e'en have enough and aplenty. The bhoy came back with smut on his nose and sthated that the tank was full.

"'How do ye know?' I demanded.

"'I've helped the owner fill her up several times,' says the brat. 'The leader insists that we know the insides of every boat on the bay. 'Tis part of our practice, and whin we get to be scouts we will all run gasoline engines.'

"So we went along and the engines war-rmed up; and I trimmed the lantern and sat me down comfortable as a cat on a pan of dough. Thin there was a horrible rumpus on deck and some watther splashed down the back of me neck. 'Tis the bar,' says me proud engine-room crew, balancin' himsilf on the plates.

"'They are shovin' dhrinks across it too fast for me,' I retorts, as more watther simmers down.

"'Oh, the leader knows all the soft places,' he returns proudly, this bould sprig. And with a

whoop we drove through a big felley that almost swamped us. Thin, as far as I cud judge, the worst was over.

"Prisintly we got into the trough of the sea and rowled along for an hour more. Then the jingle tinkled and I slowed down. Me bould Tad stuck his head in at the little door. 'The *Gladys* is right inshore from us,' he remar-rks, careless-like. 'We will signal her to up anchor and come with us.' He took me lantern and vanished.

"Whin I waited long enough for all the oil to have burned out of three lanterns I turned the engines over to me crew and stepped out on deck. It was a weepin' fog, with more rowlin' in all the time, and the feel on me cheek was like that of a stor-rm. I saw me bould Tad on the little for'a'd deck, swingin' his little lamp.

"'What's the matther with that scut of a skipper?' I inquires.

"The bhoy was fair cryin' with rage and shame. 'He cannot undherstand the signal,' says he; 'and 'tis dangerous to run closer to him in this sea.'

"'If he don't undherstand yer signal,' says I, 'tis useless to talk more to him with yer ar-rms. Use yer tongue.'

"And at that he raised a squeal that cud be heard a hundred feet, the voice of him bein' but a bhoy's, without noise and power. 'Let be,' says I. 'I've talked me mind across the deep watthers many

times.' And I filled me lungs and let out a blast that fetched everybody on deck on the other launch. Then I tould that skipper, with rage in me throat, that he must up anchor and folley us or be drownded with all his passengers dragging on his coattails through purgat'ry. And he listened, and prisintly we saw the *Gladys* creep through the darkness and fog up till us. When she crossed our stern me bould Tad tould me to command her to folley us into port.

" Ravin's and ragin's were nothin' to the language we traded across that watther for the five minutes necessary to knock loose the wits of that heathen mariner. In the end he saw the light, and the passengers that crowded his sloppy decks waved their arms and yelled with delight. Me bould Tad went into the little pilot house and slammed the door. He spoke to me sharply. ' 'Twill blow a gale before midnight.' He rang the bell for full speed ahead.

" An hour later I was signaled to stop me machines. I dropped the clutch and sint me assistant for news. He came back with big eyes. ' The leader says the other launch can't make it across the bar,' he reports.

" ' Well,' I says.

" ' We're goin' to take off her passengers and cross in oursilves,' says the brat. With that he vanishes. I folleyed him.

"We were stopped right in the fog, with roily waves towerin' past us and the dull noise of the bar ahead of us. The *Gladys* was right astern of us, and even in the darkness I cud catch a glimpse of white faces and hear little screams of women. I went to leeward and there found me bould Tad launchin' the little dingey that was stowed on the roof of the cabin. Whin it was overside four of me bould gang drops into it and pulls away for the other launch. 'They'll be swamped and drownded,' I remar-rks.

"'They will not,' says Tad. 'I trained thim mesilf. 'Tis child's play.'

"'Childher play with queer toys in this counthry,' I continues to mesilf; and I had a pain in me pit to see thim careerin' on the big waves that looked nigh to breakin' any minute. But they came back with three women and a baby, with nothin' to say excipt: 'There's thirty-one of thim, leader!'

"'Leave the min,' says he, real sharp. 'Tell the captain we'll come back for thim after we've landed the women safe.'

"I tucked the women down in the afther cabin, snug and warm, and wint back on deck. The boat was away again, swingin' over the seas as easy as a bird.

"That's good boatmanship," I remar-rks.

"'It's young Carson in command,' says me bould bhoy leader.

"'Twas fifteen minutes before the boat came back, and thin there was a man in it, with two women. Whin it swung alongside Tad helped out the ladies and thin pushed at the man with his foot. 'Back ye go!' he says. 'No room on this craft for min.'

"'But you're only a lot of bhoys!' says the man in a rage. 'Who are you to give orders? I'll come aboard.'

"'Ye will not,' says me bould Tad, and I reached into the engine room for a spanner whereby to back him up, for I admired the spunk of the young sprig. But the man stared into the lad's face and said nothin'. And the boat pulled away with him still starin' over his shoulder.

"The nixt boatload was all the rest of the women-folks and childher and Tad ordered the dingey swung in and secured. Thin he tur-rned to me. 'We will go in.'

"'Which way?' I demands.

"He put his little hand to his ear. 'Hear it?' he asks calmly. I listened and by the great Hivins there was a whistlin' buoy off in the darkness. I wint down to me machines.

"I've run me engines many a long night whin the divil was bruising his knuckles agin the plates be-

neath me. But the nixt hour made me tin years ouldher. For we hadn't more'n got well started in before it was 'Stop her!' and 'Full speed ahead!' and 'Ease her!' Me assistant was excited, but kept on spillin' oil into the cups and feelin' the bearin's like an ould hand. Once, whin a sea walloped over our little craft, he grinned across at me. 'There ain't many soft places to-night!' says he.

"'Ye're a child of the Ould Nick,' says I, 'and eat fire out of an asbestos spoon. Ye wud be runnin' hell within an hour afther ye left yer little corpse!'

"'Tis the scouts' law not to be afraid,' retor-rts me young demon. But me attintion was distracted be a tremenjous scamperin' overhead. 'For the love of mercy, what is that?' I yelled.

"'Tis the leader puttin' out the drag,' says me crew. 'Whin the breakers are high it's safer to ride in with a drag over the stern. It keeps the boat from broachin' to.' And to the dot of his last word I felt the sudden, strong pull of something on the launch's tail. Thin something lifted us up and laid us down with a slap, like a pan of dough on a mouldin' board. Me machines coughed and raced and thin almost stopped. Whin they were goin' again I saw me assistant houldin' to a stanchion. His face was pasty white and he gulped. 'Are ye scared at last?' I demanded of him.

"'I am seasick,' he chokes back. And he was, be Hivins!

"So we joggled and bobbled about and I wondhered how many times we had crossed the bar from ind to ind, whin suddenly it smoothed down and I saw a red light through the little windey. Me assistant saw it too. 'That's the range light off the jetty,' says he. 'We're inside.'

"I shoved open the door to the deck and looked out. The fog lay about us thick and the wind was risin'; I cud barely make out the lights ahead. I stuck me head out and glanced astern. 'Way back of us, like a match behind a curtain, I saw a little light bobbing up and down in the fog. I took me crew be the ear and thrust his head out beside mine. 'What is that?' I demanded.

"'Tis the other launch,' he says. 'I guess they folleyed us in.'

"We ran up to the wharf and the gang made everything fast; and then me bould Tad comes to me with a sheepish face. 'Wud ye mind tellin' the ladies and childher that they can go ashore and get to the hotel?' he says.

"So it was me that wint in and tould the ladies they were saved and helped thim to the wharf and saw thim started for the hotel. Thin I came back to the launch, but there was nobody there. Me bould gang had disappeared. Just thin the other launch came up, limpin' on one leg, covered with

drippin' men and blasphemy. They didn't wait for the lines to be put out, but jumped for the float like rats out of biscuit barrels and swarmed for the hotel. Whiles I was watchin' thim the skipper of the *Gladys* pulls himsilf out of his wrecked pilot house and approaches me with heavy footfalls. 'I'm tould that 'twas bhoys that manned this launch,' he remar-rks. 'If it is so, I wudn't have come in and nearly lost me ship.'

"'If it hadn't been for the bhoys ye'd now be driftin' into the breakers off yer favourite fishin' spot,' I retor-rts. 'I've seen many a man who'd found the door of hell locked against him swear because he hadn't the key in his pocket. Nixt time ye try suicide leave the women and childher ashore.' And with the words out of me mouth the gale broke upon us like the blow of a fish.

"We took shelter behind a warehouse and the skipper of the *Gladys* said in me ear: 'I suppose the owner of the launch had to get what crew he cud. Where is he? I'd like to thank him.'

"'If ye will come with me to the hotel ye shall see the man ye owe life to,' I infor-rmed him.

"As we intered the hotel a tall man, with the mar-rk of aut'ority on him, observed me unifor-rm and addressed me: 'What do you know about this?'

"Aut'ority is always aut'ority, and I tould him what I knew and had seen, not forbearin' to mintion the gang and their wild ambitions. And whin

I had finished this man said: 'I shall muster thim in to-morrow. I happen to be in command of the scouts in this district.'

"'But they haven't their dollars to put in the little bank,' I remar-rked. 'And they tell me without their dollar they cannot be second-class scouts, whativer that is.'

"At this a fat man reached for a hat off the hook and put his hand in his pocket, drew it out and emptied it into the hat, and passed it.

"And while the money jingled into it my respict for the brave lads rose into me mouth. 'They won't take it,' I said. 'They have refused money before. 'Tis their oath.'

"The man with aut'ority looked over at me. 'The chief is right,' he said. 'They have earned only a dollar apiece. Whose launch was that they took?'

"'Faith and I don't know,' I said. 'They remar-rked that the owner — Hivin bliss him! — had niver forbidden thim to use it.

"'Thin we must pay the rint of it for the night,' says he. 'But the bhoys will get only a dollar apiece. Where are they?'

"'They disappeared whin the boat was fast, sir,' says I. 'I think they wint home. 'Tis bedtime.'

"'D'ye know where the patrol-leader lives?' he demands.

"So we walked up the hill in the darkness and

wind till we reached the house of me bould Tad. A knock at the door brought the missus, with a towel on her ar-rm. I pushed in. 'We've come to see yer son,' says I.

"We stepped in and saw the young sprig be the fire, on a chair, with his feet in a bowl of watther and musthard. He was for runnin' whin he saw us, but cudn't for the lack of clothes. So he scowled at us. 'This is the commander of the scouts,' I says, inthroducin' me tall companion. 'And here's yer five dollars to put with yer dollar and six bits into the little bank, so's yez can all of yez be second-class scouts.'

"'We can't take the money,' says he, with a terrible growl. 'The oath forbids us to take money for savin' life.'

"'Don't be a hero,' I rebukes him. 'Ye're only a small bhoy in his undherclothes with yer feet in hot watther and musthard. No hero was ever in such a predicament. This gintleman will infor-rm ye about the money.'

"Me bould companion looked at the slip of a lad and said sharply: 'Report to me to-morrow morning with yer patrol at sivin o'clock to be musthered in.'

"With that we mar-rched out into the stor-rm and back to the hotel, where I wint to slape like a bhoy mesilf — me that was sixty-four me last birth-

day and niver thought to make a fool of mesilf with a gang of bhoys and a gasoline engine — and that on a holiday!"

THE SEAT OF JUDGMENT

THE Columbia River Light Vessel had spent six hours in finding her exact anchorage off the bar after two months in port for repairs. When the huge mushroom anchor was once more on the bottom and the cable had been stoppered, the windlass decked like a May Queen with garlands of relieving tackles, and the cook had lit a new pipe in honour of a new voyage, Chief Engineer Mickey O'Rourke formally gave the submarine-bell engine his blessing, put on an old cap and opened a fresh page on the log-book with a flourish.

"I know where I am for the first time in a month," he announced, as he marked in the latitude and longitude of the ship's position.

"Where have you been?" demanded the captain. "You took your pay checks and vanished without even a good-bye."

"I wint down to Yaquina Bay," Mickey answered. "Yez know that I once visited that spot and had adventures wid me friend Tad Sheldon and his boy scouts. I have waked at night afraid to the tips of me toes that I was once more wid thim young

limbs of the Ould One, and to see whether me ner-rve was still good I retur-rned among thim wid fear and trimbling, for I knew that they would sear-rch me to see if I was wor-rthy to wear a unifor-rm."

"And —?" put in the mate.

Mickey's face grew sober. "And?" he repeated. "Is no yar-rn iver to be finished? Yes, yez are right; 'tis always 'and' whin the tongue is weary and the bell strikes for a new watch. Nothing is iver finished. I have given judgmint among boys, and now that I am back among min wid whiskers and loud voices I don't know — did I give fair judgmint?"

The skipper leaned his enormous arms on the table. "Were the boys in trouble?"

"They were," the chief continued. "The wor-rst trouble that can come.— Yez know what happens to men when they go wrong? What did we do to Havelock?"

"He was a coward and a liar," the mate growled.

"And we tur-rned har-rd faces to him and he left the establishmint wid none to speak to him," Mickey said. "'Tis the way of judgmint among men. So whin the boys at Yaquina sat me as judge I gave sentence as a man among men. But — I don't know. May be I was wrong!"

"Was it cowardice?"

"I will tell yez exactly how it was," the engineer

replied. "And whin I am through, if I did wrong, God forgive me, for 'twase a young sprig of a felley and he looked on the ground whin I spoke.

"Whin I arrived at the Bay and had passed the time wid the men on the *Columbine* — which was setting buoys on the bar there — I walked to the hotel and wrote me name and was instantly char-rged for a week in advance. Then I went out like anny tourist and stepped briskly up and down the street as if me health was bad and I needed exercise. In due time I see me bould Tad and we shook hands secretly as men ashamed of each other.

"'How is your father and mother?' I demands.

"'They are well,' says he, as if he had just buried thim both widout a prayer.

"'Yez have me sympathy,' says I. 'And the scouts?'

"'They wear the unifor-rm,' says Tad, with bitterness.

"Thin I knew that the boy was in trouble wid his men, and we went off and sat on a rock and said nothing for two hours. At the end of that time me brave Tad scowled ferociously at me and depar-rted.

"That evening comes a red-headed lad who calls himsilf Spencer and invites me up to their little cabin on the hill.

"'Yez are free of the place,' says he crossly.

"'I raymimber yez,' I replied. 'Yez were me fir-rst assistant engineer once.'

"'I was,' he replies despondently.

"As we went up the hill among the bull-pines the sprig looked dar-rkly into the woods as if he suspected a wild animal ready to spring on us whiles we were definceless. But he said nothing till the light from the cabin shone on us. Then he asked me, 'What do yez do wid cowar-rds in the Establishmint?'

"'There are none,' says I promptly.

"'But if there was?' he insists.

"'He would not be there,' I responds.

"'Twas the judgment of men that I gave that moment, Hiven help me!

"Within the cabin the boys greeted me kindly, wid due compassion for me grey hairs and me inferior position. But I saw that something was wrong and before long I picked out the felley who was spoiling their fun. He was a big, white-faced lad wid a fancy waist-coat showing under the jersey. He talked much, wid ease and spirit, as one superior to the boys. And they treated him wid respect but answered little. I found that he was only six months on the Bay, and he had had many terrific experiences in places none of the scouts had been. We spoke as man to man, ignoring the childher.

"I went down the hill wid Tad and this big felley, who was still speaking of adventures that made

me hair stand on end. But at last I shook him by the hand and tould Tad I would see his parents, and we left him. Not a wor-rd did me bould scout say till we stamped at his father's door whin he asked carelessly, 'What do yez do wid liars in the Establishmint?'

"'There are none,' says I severely. 'No lighthouse or lightship man iver tould annything but the truth.' Hiven forgive me for the lie I tould him!

"'Thin what do yez do whin ye *do* find a liar?' he wint on in a weak voice.

"'Tis a great ser-rvice,' says me bould Mickey. 'We have niver found one yet.'

"So we went in and I yar-rned wid his ould man and when the boy had gone to bed we smoked an hour, and then the missus looked up and said, 'Misther O'Rourke, has the lad tould yez anything?'

"'Nothing,' says I bouldly. Then the three of us stared at one another and Sheldon shook his head. And I knew there was trouble. So I gave them me blessing and depar-rted.

"At the hotel I find a boy sitting on the steps. 'Twas me bould Carson wid a grin on his mouth.

"'I eat no clams this trip,' says I.

"'Tis not clams,' says the sprig. 'Tis a question.'

"'What is it?' I demands.

"'What do yez do wid the thieves in your service?' he asks in a small voice.

"'There are no thieves in the Establishmint,' says I fir-rmly.

"'But if there were?' he insists.

"'Ask no insulting questions, boy!' I cries in a terrible voice. 'Tis a shame even to listen to yez!'

"And he went away having hear-rd me judgment.

"The next morning I joined me bould scouts and we rowed strongly across the bay and they showed me a new boat house made a present to them by a skipper. But they tould me little of all that happened. 'Twas the big felley that spoke and related tales of fearful har-rdships. And the big felley — his name was Martin — despised the others wid me and we paid no attention to them but spoke as man to man above their heads. And when we had eaten we went to the railroad wharf and then back to the town, the scouts rowing wid tremenjous strength against the flood tide. When we were landed I thanked them and proceeded to the hotel. On the steps I tur-rned fiercely on a lad that had folleyed me.

"'And what do yez want, me bould Robinson?' I demands.

"He cast down his eyes in shame. 'Tis a question,' says he. 'What do yez do in the light house Establishment wid them that have no honour?'

"Then I spoke in righteous anger and struck the

poor felley wid the thunder of me wor-rds. 'There are none in the Establishment widout honour,' says I. ''Tis insulting to ask the question. Away wid yez!'

"He fled in shame and I sat up the night by the office fire wid me head in me ould hands, for I knew that me bould scouts were in trouble. Yez know that I can niver keep me hands out of other people's cake, and so the next morning I hunted up me brave Carson and I took him aside.

"'Yez asked me a question,' I tould him. 'I ray-mimber now that there was once a man crept into the Establishment and he was a thief.'

"'What did yez do wid him?' he demands sourly.

"''Tis a secret of the service,' says I.

"'Then yez are not brothers to each other in the Establishment,' says he.

"'Yez mean?' I demands.

"'I mean that in your service yez are no longer brother to a thief.'

"'We take no oath to be brothers,' I explains. 'We take oath only to the Governmint.'

"We said no more, but in the afternoon I took me gallant Tad to one side and I asked him bouldly, 'What would yez scouts do wid a thief in your service?'

"He glared at me. 'There are none among the scouts,' says he.

"'I am ashamed of mesilf,' I went on, crooking

me eye on his red face. 'But we have found a man that lies and steals among us. We are all adrift. I thought yez might help me as one friend to another and tell me your advice.'

"'Tis a question I can not answer,' says he wid haughtiness. 'The scouts are different.'

"'Yez are lucky,' says I, bitterly. 'Hiven grant that yez niver have a liar at your side in a pinch.' And wid that I wint off refusing further speech wid him.

"When I saw young Robinson I drew him behind a shed. 'I have concealed me dishonour for the sake of the service,' I tould him in a whisper. 'Yez asked me a question about a man widout honour in the Establishmint,' I says. 'There is one. We are at a loss to know what to do wid him. What would yez advise?'

"'I would advise yez to keep a still mouth,' says he.

"Then I up and scowled hidjously at him and rayfused to hold further conversation. To emphasise me scor-rn I depar-rted and met up wid me bould Martin, and we lied to each other for an hour in public. At the end of that time says Martin to me. 'I usually go for a cruise up the coast in me sailboat when the breeze is fresh. 'Tis great spor-rt sailing in the open sea, Misther O'Rourke.'

"Now young Carson and me gallant Robinson were listening wid the tips of their ears to the two

of us, and I took me hear-rt in me teeth and answered wid enthusiasm, 'I dote on it, mesilf. The last voyage I made in a small boat was in the face of the wor-rst gale we have had on the coast in thir-rty years come next November. I spint six days and six nights wid the sheet between me lips and me hat in me hand, bailing out the water. I will go wid yez up the Coast anny time.'

"Thin wid the tail of me eye I saw the bould scouts look at each other and trimble.

"'The wind is hardly enough for a good sail today,' answers Martin, casting a wise look at the sky. 'We will go up beyond the Cape to Whale Cove, which is a dangerous spot for thim that are not accustomed to heavy seas and a gale.'

"'Yez are right,' says I. 'But to-morrow let us be up ear-rly and go. I am an ear-rly riser.'

"'I hope it will blow,' says me gallant Martin. 'I will show yez some real sailing.'

"So it was agreed, and the rest of the day I paraded up and down before the town enjoying the respict of the people for that I drank salt water and cared nothing for thir-rty miles in the open sea in a skiff. Three times did I wave away Tad Sheldon, scor-rning him and consulting in a loud voice wid Martin about landing through the surf on the reef. But I shook in me boots, for — well, yez know the coast.

"So the next mor-rning I rose wid the sun and

ate a poor breakfast and then wint down to the landing where Martin kept his boat. 'Twas blowing fresh from the Nor'west and the bar was booming on both sides of the channel. I waited an hour and then tur-rns up Martin wid a gloomy face. ' 'Tis no spor-rt to-day,' says he. ' I am sorry, for I thought to give yez a sail.'

" ' Let us go anyway,' I insists, me knees shaking under me. ' 'Tis some time since I have enjoyed a rough bar. We will show these people the trick of dry feet in a wet boat.'

" He pur-rsed his lips, and then he saw that the scouts were busy within earshot — the rascals! ' Well,' says he, tur-rning blue about the mouth, ' we might run down to the lower buoy and see whether it will pay us to go on.'

" So we got into the skiff and hoisted the sail and star-rted down the bay towards the breakers. As we went past the upper buoy on the fir-rst leg across the channel I saw the tide suck it undher.

" ' 'Tis a strong ebb to-day,' I remar-rks, trying to keep me teeth still in me head. ' I see that we must go on out annyway.'

" Which was only too thrue. But I caught a glimpse of the look-out in the old lighthouse on the hill running furiously for the big bell and I rejoiced to know that the life-savers would be after us. I prayed that their legs might move swiftly, for the bar was humping and I saw that me gallant

Martin would shor-rtly put about and attimpt to sail back, which would mean that we should be dragged into the breakers tail-on, which has taken manny a man to Davy Jones.

"He thried it, saying weakly that he thought it would not pay to cross out. And the skiff wobbled in the tide and a little breaker slopped over the ster-rn and the big felley dropped the sweep and thried to get to the anchor.

"I explained to him wid one blow that the anchor was not to be got over. And I tould him that if the iron once took hold in that current we should be dragged under. Thin I took the sweep and lowered the sail and stood up to meet me fate.

"I have crossed manny bars whin it was duty and so I nur-rsed the little skiff along, and we rode over the big ones and I lifted it over the little ones and all wid niver an eye to spare to see whether the crew were coming. And me brave Martin sat between the thwarts holding on with both hands and moaning. There was no hear-rt left in the poor felley at all.

"Presintly we were across the bar and I steered gently wid the sweep for the smoother water by the whistling buoy. Then I set the sail and we took a long leg to the south'ard and I had me hands full, for the waves were crested and the wind drove us bodily to leeward. At last I looked at me bould companion and said, ''Tis a poor craft, and not fit

"HE WOULD NOT ROW. AND THIN I OPENED UP ME LIP AND TOLD THE FELLY WHAT I THOUGHT OF HIM."

for such wor-rk. 'Tis one hope for a dry skin, that we make the Alsea ten miles below us.'

"'The crew,' says he, shivering. 'They ought to have got us long ago. They are cowards not to rescue us.'

"'Tis true,' says I. 'But whin all are cowards one must wor-rk for himself. I will not be drownded for all the cowards on the Coast. Take the oars and we will pull for the whistler, which is but two miles to windward.'

"He would not row, and thin I opened me lips and I tould the felley what I thought of him, threatening him each momint wid death from the deep sea. Thin I was speechless, for I saw that the current was taking us in towards the beach and the surf was running a half-mile out and — I raymimbered manny things. 'Tis har-rd to die for being a fool.

"'Twas a blessed sight when I saw the lifeboat inside of us rowing hard to cut us off before we went into the surf. And whin they were alongside and we were safe, wid the skiff towing behind us I tould me bould Martin in a fir-rm voice that no one could really enjoy thimselves on a coast where men wearing the Governmint unifor-rm insisted on spoiling a day's pleasure.

"The captain of the crew grinned at me wid scor-rn and refused to say annything at all, and the rest of his men despised us in silence. Martin

stared at the seas heaping high about us and tried to smile. But the soul of the boy was gone and the lies had drained out of him like water out of a sack. And I said no more. 'Tis not well to speak whin judgmint is being given.

" When we were ashore again I scowled at Tad's father — Number One he is in the crew — and he looked at me har-rd.

" ' I thought yez had sinse,' says he.

" ' I trusted to the boy scouts,' I replies. ' Sure, Martin is only a lad, but I trusted the unifor-rm. 'Twas a mistake.'

" At the momint comes up the scouts thimselves, carelessly looking for shells along the beach. I raised me voice. ' Niver again will I trust to the boy scouts' unifor-rm,' I repeats wid anger and wrath in me tones. ' Yez can trust anny unifor-rm in the Establishmint, and I have little to say against the life-savers that have rescued me and me bould companion. 'Tis the difference. Wid us the unifor-rm means much and the Governmint sees to it that none wear it widout right. I despise the scouts hencefor-rth, because they do not protect the clothes they wear and so deceive the ignorant.'

" With that I depar-rted, me mousers cocked to me eyes and me fists doubled. And me gallant Martin wint away, and being on dry land he star-rted to boast of the perils we had experienced, but I paid no attintion whativer.

"That afternoon came young Carson, wid shame on his face. 'Yez are asked to the cabin to-night for a clam-bake,' says he. 'I dug the clams me-silf.'

"'I eat wid none of yez,' says I, fir-rmly. 'Yez have boasted of your skill and your knowledge and the shivers run up and down me back at the thought of the perils I have seen because of trusting yez.'

"So he wint away and presintly came Robinson, who stood on one foot and spoke of clams baked in seaweed. But I scor-rned him. 'I trust none of yez,' says I. 'Yez know a clam from nothing at all. Yez would poison me. I distrust the unifor-rm and hereafter I join only those who wear clothes that stand for something besides loud talk.'

"So he went his way, and then came Tad Sheldon. He stared at me a long time, wid a brave look in his eyes. Thin he drew me aside.

"'Yez have spoken har-rd wor-rds about me organisation,' says he.

"'I have,' says I. 'Did yez not infor-rm me that me bould Martin was the best of the lot of yez? Did I not understand that he knew more of the Coast than the keeper of the station? Did I not hear him say that he drank sea water and his breath blew ships ashore? And I trust to your judgment of him and I am hauled in from peril by the tail of me coat like a small boy out of a duck pond. I am

disgraced. The very members of the life-saving crew despise me unifor-rm for being on a fool.'

"'I have come to apologise,' says the boy quietly. He looked out across the bay and his lip trembled. But we were man to man and I said nothing.

"'I should have war-rned ye,' he went on. 'Twas me own fault. Yez have spoken har-rd wor-rds to me men and yez have spoken before manny others as well. I offer yez an apology.'

"''Tis accepted,' I responds. 'I have apologised mesilf under like circumstances.'

"We stared at each other, and I saw that the lad woud do what was right. Then I remar-rked, 'I was invited to eat clams to-night. I will find young Carson and tell him that I am hungry for thim.'

"So I wandered about till I met both Carson and Robinson, and I caught them by their little sleeves and infor-rmed them that I would eat wid them that night. And in the evening I wint up and ate too manny entirely, and we talked of things and people, but no wor-rd of Martin nor of the mor-rning. But I knew that judgmint had been given. And —"

The captain of the lightship nodded. "And —," he repeated slowly.

"May be that boy had good stuff in him afther all," murmured Mickey, casting his bright eyes about the cabin.

The mate shook his head. "That's not the

question," he muttered. "It's the good of the service we've got to think of — even if — well, you know it comes hard to — to sit in judgment."

"But they were only boys," the chief engineer remarked.

"They are men when it comes to questions of honour," said the skipper. "And boys must keep their uniform clean the same as us."

"Hivin help us all when we come to judgmint," murmured Mickey O'Rourke.

TAD SHELDON, CRUSADER

YOUNG ROBINSON of Tad Sheldon's patrol was leaving Yaquina Bay for "Outside"—the City of Portland. The spring term of school was opening and Robinson was bewailing the fate which was taking him away from the sea to immure him among walls and desks and books.

"There's no chance to do any scouting up there," Robinson said grumpily.

Tad threw a twig of salal bush into the air and watched it flit down the wind. "Storm coming," he remarked. "I'll bet the *Wilhelmina* will have a rough trip down."

"Wish I could get to Portland on her. Have to take the beastly train."

"Wish I could go to school up there," Tad muttered, thereby lighting up Young Robinson's face to an extraordinary degree.

"Say!" he burst out. "Why don't you? Mother talked about it to your mother. And maybe the two of us could do some scout work."

"Nothing in the city for us this time of year," was the gloomy response. "Of course I'd like to go to school, but I can't leave the boys here."

"Of course you can," came the warm reply. Young Robinson threw a second twig into the air and announced, "It *is* a gale coming."

"Well, I don't know about school. I'm awful shy on arithmetic, and if I'm going to study navigation I've got to have some teacher. Captain Tyler told me so."

"Well," said Robinson awkwardly, "s'pose you have a yarn with your mother about it."

This was all that was said, but Tad understood the hint. That night he sat by the stove and assumed a gloomy expression which he knew would lead his mother to ask him anxious questions.

"Oh, I just thought I'd like to go to high school somewhere," he said presently.

Mrs. Sheldon smiled. "Do you like Willie Robinson?" she inquired, casually.

"Ye-e-s. He's come out to be a pretty good sort of fellow. But he's too rich for us."

"I was talking to her the other day," Mrs. Sheldon went on placidly, hanging up the dishpan to drip itself dry. "And she says Willie is rather lonesome, and they'd like you to be with him a while. He's fond of scouting, and you could live there very cheaply."

Tad shook his head. "Not with them. I don't get along with city fellows."

"You could come back here and help the other boys a good deal better."

The conversation ended, but the next morning Tad brought the subject up again. "It looks to me as if some one of our crowd *ought* to go to Portland," he told his mother. "We need some fellow in the outfit that knows more'n we do now — arithmetic and such. And he could watch how they do it in the city."

That settled it. Mrs. Sheldon and Mrs. Robinson talked and smiled that afternoon and that night Tad packed his belongings to be in readiness for the morning boat to the railroad station. He carefully packed his knife, cruiser's axe, match-safe, pack-sack, boots and compass. His mother attended to his clothes and books. At the last moment Young Robinson appeared, wind-blown and dripping. He put his Alaska lantern (made of a lamp-chimney, shingle and tallow candle) inside the door and said:

"Just came around a moment. Blowing a gale from the sou'east. We'll have a rough bay tomorrow morning."

"Yes."

"And we'll get to Portland just in time to hear the General talk."

"There isn't any real scouting in the city," Tad growled.

"There is, too. Mother tells me the boy scouts helped rescue some folks that were caught under an old bridge a week ago — first aid, watching property

and all that. And she says there's lots to do and we can get busy."

Thus cheered Tad went to bed, got up at five in the morning, said his good-byes and departed for the city. That night he looked critically at the broad paved streets, the hurrying crowd, the tall buildings, and was silent. His training had taught him not to say anything in a strange country. But he saw that Young Robinson was quite at home and it cheered him.

That night when they were in bed Tad called over, "Say, there's lots doing on the river."

"There's plenty to do in Portland," was the response. "School doesn't open till day after to-morrow. We'll just look around. And there's plenty of woods and streams all around."

"I'd like to look over the city," Tad answered, his imagination fired with the mystery of the great and noisy place.

So the next morning at breakfast they announced their intention of exploring Portland.

"Good," said Mr. Robinson from behind his paper. "And to-night we'll all go and hear the General at the Armory." Mr Robinson had learned from his wife something of Tad's influence, and viewed with great approval the new confidence and modesty of his only son.

Before the meal was over Mrs. Robinson remarked, "Martha tells me her baby is very sick

this morning and the doctor said it must be the milk they buy. Martha says the doctor says that half the dairies in the city sell milk unfit for use."

"It's up to the dairy commissioner," Mr. Robinson answered. "We elect him and pay him to look after it. Murphy is an old hand, raised on a ranch and I never heard he didn't know his business."

"But the doctor—"

"If the doctors are so cock-sure why don't they go to Murphy and prove it and make him clean up the dairies?" was the crusty reply.

"Martha says that, too, and the doctors say nobody will take the matter up.—The baby is very sick."

An hour later as Tad and Young Robinson were on their way from Irvington to the West Side, Robinson explained:

"Aunt Martha has a young kid and the way she fusses over it would make you tired."

Tad whistled, stared at the now clearing sky and then said sagely, "Mothers are always fussy."

But when, two days later, he saw the bereaved mother in the Robinson hallway and perceived the anguish on her face and caught the note of sorrow in her voice, he listened further. Mothers were fussy but —

"And it's all my fault," said Aunt Martha sobbingly. "It was the bad milk and I bought it! But I *did* ask the man for his certificate of inspec-

tion and he showed it to me. And the doctor insists that there was nothing else the matter. It's — It's written on the death — certificate!" The poor mother broke down and cried. Tad slipped away to find Young Robinson.

"Look here," he said abruptly. "That kid's dead and the certificate was no good. The dairyman didn't know how to run his place and the milk killed the kid. D'ye know what they do with skippers and mates and engineers that don't know their business?"

"What?"

"They take their certificates away from 'em. Look at that old boy Nettleson — made a mistake and has to stop ashore the rest of his life. Let's find out whether they'll take this certificate away from that dairyman. Say, it's our *duty*."

Instantly Robinson responded eagerly. "It was a good kid all right, and Aunt Martha is pretty nice. S'pose we sneak around —"

"Scout around, you mean."

"Don't be huffy; *scout* around, then. Maybe we can find out that this fellow's been doing wrong and — there must be other kids drinking the milk!"

"Right you are. Say, we'll do that."

For two weeks they spent the two hours between the closing of school and time to get home in haunting the various outskirts of Portland where the dairies were. It was chill weather, and the dark-

ness came early; yet they persevered with increasing gusto. They found queer trails that led up the heights from paved streets, discovered unknown creeks and springs, and once came upon a camp lately used.

"Hoboes," said Young Robinson.

"Indians," said Tad and explained that no hobo ever erected a shelter. He pointed to the five holes in the ground that marked where the tent poles had been thrust in.

"There are lots of Indians — Siwash — come around here in the fall," Robinson admitted. "Mother buys baskets of 'em."

Tad thought this over and then remarked, "Down on the Bay they come in only for beef. Maybe —"

"Maybe what?"

"Let's find those Indians. I have an idea. I've seen 'em buy old cows. And this is a fresh camp. The coons have been here in the last three days and *that* means there were scraps left here — dried fish and meat. It would take the coons only a couple of days to clean it up."

The next day, being the Saturday holiday, the boys started out early in the morning and trailed the Indians. It was noon when they found them, making a camp not far from a big dairy farm.

Mustering what Siwash he knew Tad approached an old woman who was cooking something over a small fire and very solemnly said, "*Klahowya six.*"

"*Klahowya,*" she returned. Then, breaking into English, asked eagerly, "Buy basket?"

"No," said Tad. "What are you cooking?"

"Cow."

"Buy 'em of the dairy here?"

The old crone nodded and went on stirring the mess in the pot. Young Robinson bent over and smelled of it. "Ugh!" he grunted.

"You buy 'em up there?" demanded Tad, pointing to the dairy stable on the hill.

"Yes."

By patient questioning, now in English and then in Chinook, Tad found that the little band were travelling from the Cascades to the sea after a season of hop-picking, salmon fishing, hunting in the lower ranges and selling the baskets made the previous year. He also learned that during the early winter months they subsisted by buying old cows for a song from the various dairymen in the suburbs of the city. When his curiosity was satisfied he touched Young Robinson on the elbow. "Come on."

"Where?"

"To that dairy farm."

They toiled up the trail and Tad pointed to the cow tracks in the mud. "I guess we're on a warm trail," he said breathlessly.

In the corral outside the stable they saw a couple of Indians dressed in tattered white man's clothes

talking to the foreman, who was pointing vigorously to an old sick cow that stood in the corner. The boys listened a while, and Tad said savagely, "This is the place your aunt bought the milk from. They're selling the Indians that sick cow because they can't use the milk any more."

"She's terrible looking," muttered Robinson.

"Indians will eat anything that's cheap."

"D'ye s'pose they milked her all this time?"

"That's for us to find out," said Tad. "I guess we've seen enough. Now we've got to get these fellows' certificates cancelled, just like they take the tickets away from bum skippers and mates."

That evening they approached Mr. Robinson on the subject, but without going into too many details.

"You boys seem to have found out a lot," he remarked. "But the papers are the ones to get to work. And they won't, mind you. If I were you, I'd drop this and take up something else."

"But Aunt Martha's baby died!" protested his son.

Mr. Robinson grunted for answer.

Over Sunday the two boys consulted hourly over what they should do. Monday afternoon they went to a doctor's office.

"He's the man that looked after the kid that died," said Robinson, "and he 'tended me when I had the measles. He's a beastly bore but maybe he'll tell us about the milk."

Dr. Macpherson peeked through his door at the two lads who had been announced by the nurse in the outer office and then came out, quite puzzled. Tad did not know what to say and kept a dignified silence.

"What can I do for you?" the doctor demanded a second time.

Young Robinson stood up politely. "You attended my Aunt Martha's kid," he explained, "and you told her it was bad milk killed it. We've looked at the dairy, and he's got some awful sick cows there."

Dr. Macpherson frowned. "I'm only a doctor," he said brusquely. "I tell what I know and then my duty is done. If the people of Portland won't clean up the dairies when we doctors tell 'em what's the matter, I, for one, don't intend to make a fool of myself."

The last phrase showed both boys that the doctor was treating them as equals.

"How will we stir the people up?" Tad demanded stoutly. "The kid is dead. Mostly they take the certificates away from people that kill others."

Macpherson stared and then said mildly, "The newspapers usually attend to these things, my children."

"We're boy scouts," corrected Young Robinson.

"I beg pardon," said the doctor promptly, was

thoughtful a moment and then said, "Go and see Mr. Travis on the *Evening World*. His own kid is sick, and he might be interested."

City Editor Travis received the two youths with some impatience. He looked from one to the other; from Young Robinson's rather gentle, if well tanned features, to Tad Sheldon's bronzed face. It was the second quick question that brought a reply which made him pause:

"And who are you?"

"William Robinson, Jr."

"We-ell?"

Tad had been brought up in a world where curt language was common, and he quickly covered Young Robinson's evidently injudicious response to such treatment by saying, "We're boy scouts, sir. We've found that some of the dairies are selling milk from sick cows. Robinson's kid cousin died of it. We think the milkman's ticket ought to be taken away."

Travis nodded. "And who said the milk was responsible for the child's death?"

"Dr. Macpherson."

The city editor picked up his telephone and asked for a number. When he was connected he asked a few gentle questions and then: "Mary, where do we buy the milk we are using?"

He jotted down the answer, said good-bye and hung up. Then he called a name.

A reporter brushed his way down the crowded room, and Tad recognised the authority in the editor's voice when he demanded:

"You're assigned to get the vital statistics at the City Health Office, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you copy the certificates of death filed there?"

"Yes."

"How many of 'em assign bad milk as a contributory cause to death?" snapped Travis.

"I don't know. Nobody ever asked me to find out."

"Go over this last month's certificates," came the order, "and copy every last one of children under three years old. Go right up and be back here as soon as you can."

The reporter vanished and Tad and Young Robinson were told to sit down and wait.

The next hour seemed very short, so much that was new passed before their eyes. When the reporter entered they heard the editor say,

"Twenty-six babies died of sickness brought on by bad milk in the last thirty days? In winter time, too? Why didn't you tell me?"

"No one seemed interested," said the reporter carelessly.

Travis smiled grimly and dismissed him. He

called the boys and said bluntly, "What business is all this of yours?"

"We're boy scouts," said Tad firmly. "The kid died and its mother feels awful. Other kids are drinking that same milk. We're sworn to help people."

"Good! Now tell me what you know."

Slowly — for they were not used to telling things briefly and emphasising the main points, Tad and Young Robinson related the story of their search for the dairy that had sold the bad milk, of all the strange things they had seen, of the Indians that bought sick cows, of what everybody had said: that some newspaper ought to take it up. When they were done Travis scowled at the ceiling. Then he smiled.

"Say, will you boys keep on with this? I think the *World* will back you up. D'ye know any more scouts that will help?"

"All of them *have* to," was the simple reply.

"And how many are there of you?"

Tad promptly explained that he was a patrol leader from Yaquina Bay, but that at the General's speech in the Armory there had been six hundred scouts from Portland.

"Can you get the whole six hundred to work on this?"

The lads stared at each other and then accepted the commission with a nod.

Travis smiled again. "Go to it. Get the name of every dairyman who has a sick cow in his stables. Keep an eye on 'em; bring in the names and addresses of every sick baby in the city. Then we'll see what we can do."

"We've got to go and see the scout masters first, sir," said Tad. "We're only scouts and our commanders must give the orders.— And they'll do it."

That night both Young Robinson and Tad studied over the roster of the Portland district, and the next day they spent in visiting the various heads of the organisation, with the result that within a week and without publicity City Editor Travis had at his service six hundred trained scouts whom he worked to the limit.

Two weeks later State Dairy Commissioner Murphy called on City Editor Travis in great wrath.

"Look here, what's all this mean? Politics is politics, of course; but you've no right to accuse me of crookedness. I'm running my office, I tell you, as you'll find out if you get fresh."

"You are licensing dairies that sell milk from sick cows," was the calm reply. "Children are dying. You're responsible."

"I'm not. Those cows are all right. Dr. Koch himself has said that milk from cows with tuberculosis can't hurt people."

"Then you admit that you license people to sell milk from cows with tuberculosis?"

"Certainly," said the commissioner hotly. "I'm here to build up the industries of this state, not to destroy them. You're attacking one of the biggest industries of Oregon."

Travis scowled. "I'm trying to save a few kids. This paper doesn't propose to stand for a salaried officer of the state licensing sickness and death."

"I tell you Dr. Koch says—"

"All the doctors in the city who have any wits and are up-to-date say differently," insisted the city editor angrily. "Anyway, would you like to drink milk from a sick cow? Say, would you?"

The next day Tad Sheldon found himself confronting the city editor and listening to the most extraordinary commands he had ever received.

"Look here, Tad," Travis began. "That dairy commissioner has the whole political gang behind him and the morning paper. The milk has been proved horrible by every possible analysis. The children are still getting sick, even in the winter time. Next summer they will die like flies. Now how many of the scouts do you know personally and can trust?"

Tad thought long and deeply. "This is something the leaders don't know about," he said finally.

"They mustn't know until it's over," was the firm response. "As a movement your boy scouts will have to keep clear of this particular thing. You'll have to go this alone. I'm going to prove to all

Portland exactly what their milk supply is. It may mean trouble for us all. It's the only way."

"Honest?" asked Tad.

"It's perfectly honest," said Travis. "But if you will help me out we'll show Portland something they never dreamed of."

"All the boys are game," Tad asserted loyally.

"Good. And how many can you get to help you to-morrow and to-morrow night?"

"Maybe fifty or a hundred — kids I or Young Robinson know pretty well."

"Listen, Tad. The veterinaries of the Government have reported five thousand diseased cows among the dairies here. You know where the big places are and I guess you know a sick cow when you see one?"

"Yes, the sickest ones. Anybody could tell 'em in the dark."

"Well and good; collect your men and tell 'em this —"

The city editor lowered his voice while Tad listened intently. At the end of half an hour Tad nodded, his face flushed.

"I see, Mr. Travis. And that's the list of places and directions?"

"Yes. Now get that all memorised. I'll tend to the rest."

Tad stood on one leg reflectively. Then he nodded once more and vanished.

The city editor opened a drawer and pulled out a great pile of photographs, each mounted on a big sheet of cardboard. "If we don't give an object lesson that morning I miss my guess — and my job," he muttered.

The day will never be forgotten in Portland. It had stopped raining early in the morning, and as a consequence the streets were early filled with people walking to their offices. But at every bridge approach and on every corner stood a boy in uniform bearing a big banner reading thus:

WHAT IS THE NAME OF YOUR DAIRY?

Would You Like to See
The Cows That
Supply
YOUR CHILD OR BABY
With Milk?

And each boy was furnished with a big package of cards with the names of the various dairies and this succinct information:

Following the name of each dairy is the name of the park square where you can examine the cows. Ask any boy scout for information.

At first the citizens laughed, frowned and thought the matter a hoax; but it quickly spread abroad that

every park block in the city was filled with cattle herded by boy scouts, and within two hours half Portland was streaming in the various directions indicated on the cards.

William Robinson, Sr., walking briskly to his office at nine o'clock, stopped and read the banners and picked up a card. He pursed his lips. Five minutes later he telephoned his wife.

"Where's Willie?"

"He's still out with the scouts and Tad. Anything the matter?"

"Nothing to worry about," he replied and hung up.

But within a quarter of an hour he was approaching an open square whence came the subdued lowing of cattle. He saw a policeman wretched and perspiring in an effort to clear the street. He pushed through and was confronted by an enormous printed sign:

MEXICAN FARM COWS.

"I believe that was the place Martha bought the bad milk," he mused and thrust himself into the first line. Here he saw his son guarding a temporary rope barrier that separated the thronging men and women from the uneasy cows. Beyond him he saw a small booth into which people were struggling to enter. He nodded to Willie

and went on to find himself staring at this sign:

> IN THIS BOOTH YOU MAY SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALL THE BABIES WHO HAVE DIED THE LAST SIX MONTHS FROM DRINKING MILK FROM THESE COWS . . . WHY NOT SEE THE DAIRY COMMISSIONER ABOUT IT? HE INSPECTED AND LICENSED THIS DAIRY JUST SIXTY DAYS AGO.

An hour later William Robinson, Sr., edged his way up to his son. "Look here," he said huskily, "where'd you get that picture of little Martha?"

"From Aunt Martha," was the reply.

"And who brought these cows here?"

"I did with a lot of other boys." We scouted out to the place and drove 'em in this morning. My, but that man is hopping mad!"

Mr. Robinson surveyed the staggering brutes carefully. Then the universal nausea overcame him and he departed quietly, ignoring the eager greetings and questionings of those hurrying up to view the show.

When he had reached a telephone he called up three men. To each of these three he said curtly, "I'm going to see that none of those cows ever get back into a dairy. Understand me? If you don't, go to the nearest park and SEE! What do

these officeholders mean? Now, you know *me*. That's all I have to say. Good-bye."

Then he called up the city editor of the *World*. "This is William Robinson. I'm much obliged for your work in this matter. The boys tell me you put it through. It's public service, and of the best kind. By the way, I shall say so publicly and you may quote me."

"There's a young gentleman of your name deserves praise," said the city editor. "By the way, the police are getting active and it looks like trouble and —"

"I have just communicated with the three commissioners, who are personal friends of mine," was the response that floated back over the wire. "I understand the dairy commissioner has asked for protection, and that will absorb the energies of the available force. Good-bye."

That evening at dinner Mr. Robinson looked at Tad Sheldon quizzically. "I suppose you know the dairy commissioner has resigned?"

"Hunh!" said the weary boy scout, "he'd have quit this morning if he had had to herd those poor cows."

But when Aunt Martha put her arms around him just before he went to bed and whispered, "Tad, Tad! you were too late!" the boy knew that the best any man or lad does is always too little. He returned her kiss.

THE GHOST OF EAGLE MOUNTAIN

IT all began when Wild Bill, the packer, brought Mrs. Turnbull in from her homestead claim halfway up the forested side of Eagle Mountain and the hard working widow stood for fifteen minutes at the foot of the stairs which led to Justice of the Peace Jenkins's office staring at the utterly uninteresting wall and then whispered, "Maybe the boy didn't do it!"

Tad Sheldon, of the Yaquina Bay Scouts, heard that merciful whisper and understood what Wild Bill had meant when he savagely muttered that Tommy Harris would "get his." Tommy was a silent boy who had had hard luck since a felling wedge had been snapped out of a cut in a tree through his father's chest. When the tree was on the ground at last the Harris fortunes lay there too. So Tommy had left his mother to look after the Elk Creek claim while he went to work at the store to pay for the supplies they would eat and wear till the widow could prove up. He packed in from Toledo to Otter Rock and North to Eagle Mountain.

Mrs. Turnbull got her supplies from Tommy every Tuesday. Mrs. Turnbull was very poor, old

and melancholy. When she finally proved up on her claim she would be worth eight thousand dollars. Meanwhile she was living alone and trying to exist on an infinitesimal sum advanced by a speculative timberman.

This Tad Sheldon knew. He also knew that some one had robbed Mrs. Turnbull's cabin three times and that the last time the theft had not been discovered until the widow went to get a twenty dollar gold piece — the last of her scanty store — to pay Cruiser Jones his bill.

And Tommy Harris was charged with this crime!

He watched Mrs. Turnbull until she finally left the doorway. He saw by her face that she could not bring herself to swear out a complaint against the boy packer. But this would not end the matter: every man around Eagle Mountain would insist that the criminal be found and punished just to save the good name of the township. On the other hand, Sheldon did not believe that Tommy would steal at all, much less from an old woman. But what to do? He sought his chum and fellow scout, Kit Carson, and together they discussed the matter.

"It seems as if we ought to be able to do something," Tad said, when he had explained the situation. "You know they'll send Tommy to the penitentiary if they convict him, and what'll his mother do?"

Carson nodded. "Yes, and what will Mrs. Turnbull do? You say fifty dollars is gone — all the money she had for this year's expenses." Kit's face reddened with sudden anger. "Any fellow that'll rob a poor woman!" he exploded.

"It looks to me as if we scouts ought to help out in this," Tad replied. "Look here, we might do a little detective work. If we find the thief we'll save Tommy Harris, his mother, and maybe get Mrs. Turnbull's money back."

"I'll bet it was Indians took that money!"

Tad shook his head. "What's the use of guessing? Too many people have guessed who took it already. Let's *find out!*"

They started back up the beach towards town when Kit stopped. "Say, what if Tommy *did* take it?"

The sole response was a curt shake of the head.

"What are we going to do now?"

"See Mrs. Turnbull."

Kit stopped again. "Say, Tad, it's really none of our business."

"Who's going to say that if we find out who did it? Keep mum till we settle it one way or another. The old lady'll understand. What she wants is help, not advice."

They found Mrs. Turnbull sitting disconsolately in the dim hallway of the Newport House. Wild Bill was remonstrating with her bitterly. As the

boys came up he was saying, "That Harris kid was the only feller that was past your place this month, Mis' Turnbull. And if ye don't pinch him you'll miss more money some other time when it might be some one else. Then suspicion'll fly around and we'll all be mixed up in it. It's only fair to everybody that takes the Eagle Mountain trail to settle the business right here and now."

But the widow would not be moved and shook her head so definitely that the packer moved away, growling to his dogs.

Tad Sheldon stepped in and took off his cap. "I'm Sheldon of the boy scouts, Mrs. Turnbull," he said quickly. "This is Carson, a scout too. We heard somebody had stolen money or something out of your cabin and we thought maybe we could help you find it."

The old woman stared at them and then shook her head. "I don't want to find it any more," she said dismally. "It's made trouble enough all ready."

"Well," Tad said quietly, "we heard a friend of ours was accused and we know he didn't do it and we wanted to prove he didn't by finding your money for you."

Mrs. Turnbull considered this a moment and nodded. "I just couldn't swear I suspected that boy. He's been so nice and accommodating and spent an hour just last week hunting my silver thim-

ble that my husband gave me when we were married. And then he always brings me my mail and a daily paper that some one left in the hotel or the store. And he tells me about his mother and about their claim—" She broke off. Her grey lips quivered. "Tommy's just been *company* to me out there. I never see any one else at all, and if he's an hour late I just miss him so I have to cry."

Both Tad and Kit understood the loneliness that fills the great Siletz forest, that feeling of solitude which brings many a homesteader a score of miles over almost impassable trails merely for an hour's talk. And there were few lonelier cabins than the widow's, which lay a mile off the main trail. So both boys nodded sympathetically.

"But what could you do?" she went on dully. "We've — it couldn't have got lost because I always put the money in a hole I made with the two-inch auger in a post by the stove. And it wasn't there!"

Kit looked down. "Did Tommy know where it was?" he demanded.

Mrs. Turnbull looked distress but made no answer. Tad spoke up quickly. "That doesn't matter now. When are you going back, Mrs. Turnbull?"

"I allowed I'd stay in town a few days," she said. "Just couldn't bear to go back and not be

sure whether Tommy did it or not. I thought maybe I'd go back Saturday."

"This is Tuesday," Tad said. "D'you mind if we have a look around till Saturday? You wouldn't mind not doing anything till you see us?"

"I don't believe I could do anything anyway," she replied.

"Then we'll do what we can and let you know Saturday when you come out to your claim, Mrs. Turnbull."

"You're going all the way out there?" she said, brightening up. "Then you don't think Tommy did it and it got lost instead?"

"I think that's about it," Tad returned. "So don't you worry and fret. We boys are going for a hike before the rains begin, anyway; and we might as well go by way of Eagle Mountain."

They all three shook hands solemnly, and then Tad and Kit sped off to their cabin headquarters on the hill. On the way Tad remarked, "Just you and I will go to-morrow morning, Kit. You know the folks said we could have to-morrow for fishing. We can make the Turnbull claim to-morrow afternoon. We'll go up to Toledo in the train. It's only fifteen miles from there. I guess father will let me stay till Sunday, and your mother is going visiting, anyway. So I'll have the other fellows hike over Saturday and meet us."

"Grub?"

"Four days' grub and a pound of wire nails for you," Tad replied.

Kit glanced at him curiously, but said no more until they were in the cabin. Then he remarked casually, "What do you want with wire nails?"

"Ten-pennies," was the only answer. "Got to get home and do my chores. We'll start at half-past five and catch the steamer at six o'clock for the railroad landing. So long."

At nine the next morning the boys were scouting up the hill above Toledo, with a warm September sun on their backs and fern-dust thick on their faces.

"Hot work, this," said Kit.

"Soon be cold enough as soon as we strike into the trees. Hope Mrs. Turnbull has a fireplace."

"Say, Tad," said Kit presently, "what on earth do you want wire nails for?"

Tad threw himself down among the fern and stared into the gorgeously blue sky. "You'll see before long," he said dreamily. "We'll hike on across to the Eagle Mountain trail pretty soon and meet Tommy. He's coming in from Butterfield's to-day. We ought to find him about two o'clock. So there's no hurry."

Once within the shadow of the forest the boys fell into single file and trudged steadily on. The trail led along a high spur of the mountain and below them the tree-tops offered a green surface almost as level and unbroken as if it were a meadow.

It was two hours before either spoke. Then Tad leaned his pack against a tree and whistled shrilly. From far along the trail came an answering whistle.

"That's Tommy, all right," said Kit, putting his watch back in his pocket. "He's a mile and a quarter away."

Presently, as they waited, there rose to them a delicate, separate sound; it was so slight and frail that the ear barely caught it. The boys glanced at each other. "Mule bell," said Tad.

Before long they heard the bell distinctly, and a moment later appeared four mules, strung along the trail and behind them Tommy Harris. The mules stopped and the boys greeted each other. Tommy related the news of the forest and Tad and Kit told the news of the Outside — except one bit thereof. Neither mentioned Mrs. Turnbull nor her having packed out to see the authorities. It was Tommy himself who spoke the name first.

"I'm early to-day. Usually stop a little while with Mrs. Turnbull, but she wasn't there to-day. Guess she went out with Wild Bill. Pretty lonely out there for an old woman."

"We saw her down the Bay," Kit remarked.

Tommy's face lightened. "Now I'm glad she did," he said. "She's seemed sick for several weeks and though she never said anything I think she needed some medicine and some company."

"She isn't well," Tad returned. "She was

speaking to us about how nice you'd been to her. Said you found her thimble for her."

"Sure! and I did have some hunt for it, too. Can't see how she ever lost it where she did — right in the middle of a big salmon berry bush. Must have thrown it out with the dish-water, I guess."

Tad nodded. "Well, we must get along. We're out for a long hike. See you later, Tommy!"

The scouts travelled on in silence for a few more hours, then turned from the main trail into the little one which was marked by a spruce shake nailed on a big tree and bearing the inscription in rough capitals, "M. TURNBULL, 1 M SE."

This trail led steeply down for a quarter of a mile, and skirted a very rocky ledge which was almost covered with the network formed by the roots of the huge firs. Below this the boys found it necessary to cross a small creek on a fallen cedar and climb a very steep rock on the other side. When they were once more on good footing Tad looked at Kit.

"And that's the trail that old lady takes! Say, that's pretty tough travelling!"

"Mighty few people would go visiting over it," Kit replied with a grin.

"And mighty few thieves!"

"That's right," Kit answered, thoughtfully. "I

can see now that Tommy wouldn't think of it.—Say, Tad, what's your idea?"

"I don't mean to be mean, Kit, but I'm trying to finish out my plan. It may not work. If it does, we've not only cleared Tommy's good name but we'll catch the thief and get the money back before she returns. Just wait!"

A few yards further brought them to the bank of another creek and in the clearing just beyond this stood a cabin they knew must be Mrs. Turnbull's.

"Neat place," said Tad as they crossed the stream and started up the slight slope that had been spaded up for a garden. "Look at the flowers there!"

"Nasturtiums."

"'Nother proof that Tommy didn't steal that money," said Tad.

Kit Carson slipped his pack off his shoulders and stared long at his companion.

"Say, Sheldon, let up on me."

Tad grinned. "Let's have supper, as it's five o'clock, and then we'll talk business."

"All right, but this is getting on my nerves."

Tad became suddenly serious. "I say, Kit, I'm working on a plan that is simple as falling off a peeled log. But it may not work after all. If it doesn't, you and I are hard put."

"Just one plan?"

"That's all. I'm almost certain we'll have the thief and the money before Saturday night when the old lady comes back. But step easy, Kit, for I'm not sure."

Meanwhile the boys had entered the cabin and started the fire, which went off with the hearty flare and blaze that shows skill in laying one.

"Mrs. Turnbull knows how, all right, even if she is old," said Tad.

Kit laughed. "Tommy laid that fire. He's left-handed, and the man that cut that gum-wood did it with a cruiser's axe, and he was left-handed. Look!"

He picked up a piece of the kindling that lay in a corner and handed it to Tad.

"You're right," Sheldon answered. "Beat me to it! Now if Tommy will come clear over that rotten trail after he's already made thirty miles in two days and build a fire for the old lady, I don't believe he'd steal from her."

"Might have come to find something else?"

"Shut up!"

The boys cooked their bacon and pancakes and made up their beds on the floor. When they had eaten they set forth to explore the place.

The cabin was what is known in the Siletz as a contract cabin, built in three days by men who make a business of it. It consisted of one room with a shake bed, a set of shelves and a door in the rear, a

half-pitch roof of shakes laid on hemlock rafters with spruce ties, a couple of heavy tables, a big window in one side, a wardrobe across from this, and the stove almost in the middle of the room and set on a solid round cut of fir, like a butcher's block. The stovepipe went straight up through the ridge of the roof, which was braced around this in box-form so as to allow for the zinc square that kept the heat from attacking the wood. In the rear was a lean-to for fuel, oil and tools.

Tad poked a finger under the bedding and shook his head. "No springs at all. Just plain shakes. We'll make a rope bed to-morrow and put in there. I've slept on shakes before."

"So've I," Kit responded, "and never again. Too hard for me."

"And she's old. We'll fix things up to-morrow and next day."

"But we'll have other things to do — hunting around for that money and the thief."

"No."

"Got him yet?"

Tad smiled. "We've got to do all this work I've planned at night. Daytime we can't do a thing. Now if you'll just let me have those wire nails."

Kit fished them out of his sack and put them on the table. Tad pulled out a big ball of fine fish-net thread, and without saying anything more proceeded to cut off a half-dozen pieces about six feet long.

Then he picked up six nails and carefully tied a string to each, making a double hitch around the nail and fastening it down around the corrugations so that it could not slip.

"I'm up a very tall tree," Kit muttered.

"Come down," said Tad. "That is my bait for the robber."

"Then you think there was a robber?"

"Yep."

"And those gold pieces weren't lost, then?"

"Nope."

"Where are you going to put this bait?"

"About the house. Did you look for that auger hole the old lady spoke about?"

"No. Let's find it."

After some search they found it in the top of a five-inch beam just under the shakes and just over the wall. It was about an inch deep and two inches in diameter, and both boys agreed that no better hiding-place could have been found.

Into this Tad put two wire nails, allowing the threads to drop on the inside to the cabin floor.

"Hurt his fingers and yell? Is that the notion, Tad?"

"Wait and see. Now put another nail on the beam over the dishpan and give me the others."

Kit did as he was told and Tad went into the lean-to. He returned presently and announced that this was all that was to be done.

"Well," said Kit, amiably, "maybe you know what you're about. I don't."

"Look here, Kit," Tad replied. "Now please repeat to me exactly what we know."

Kit understood that this was a lesson in scouting — though of a nature he had never experienced — so he settled himself to say over the facts in the case. He got as far as that Mrs. Turnbull had missed her third gold piece several weeks after the first one had vanished. Tad stopped him.

"You've missed something, Kit."

"You mean she — oh, the thimble that Tommy found for her?"

"Yes. Go on."

"There isn't any more, except that they suspect Harris of stealing the coin."

"Yes, there's more — the important thing."

"What is it?"

"Use your wits."

Carson pondered the question and then asked,

"You mean about Tommy's finding it where he did?"

"Yes. Didn't he say it was in a salmon berry bush?"

"I don't see it yet."

"We haven't found that salmon berry bush yet, have we?"

"No."

"WELL, as soon as it gets real dark we'll see

if we can't. Get your lantern ready," said Tad. "The moon doesn't come up till ten o'clock. Before then we'll see if my notion works at all."

As soon as it was dark the boys started out with the lantern and carefully circled the cabin several times. The salmon brush grew no closer to the building than forty feet, but there was a goodly clump of it from that one. Each time that they passed this Tad peered into it. The fourth time he halted Kit, who was carrying the lantern, and pointed eagerly into the thorny thicket. "There you are!" he said excitedly. "See that?"

Kit stared and they approached the spot Tad was indicating. Kit stooped under the branches and held the lantern down.

"Pooh! just a tin can!"

"Sure," said Tad, shaking with excitement. "Now if the other things'll work as well."

Kit was excited himself by this time, but Tad refused to say more. "I worked this out carefully myself," he insisted. "Now you keep your eyes and ears open and we'll catch Mr. Thief, I think."

To his companion's surprise Tad now said it was bedtime and they went in and closed the door. Without another word Tad rolled up in his blanket and said Good-night.

For some time Kit sat huddled by the lantern

thinking hard. But he could make nothing out of the matter and his weary limbs were aching for the bed. So he made himself ready, blew out the light and was soon asleep.

He knew no more till he was wakened by Tad with a touch on the arm.

"S-s-h!" Tad was whispering. "Get your watch and tell me what time it is."

A strip of moonlight lay from the window and by this Kit ascertained that it was midnight. Tad nodded. "Stay awake a moment and listen."

The absolute stillness of the vast forest held the little cabin. There was not even the whisper of a skunk nor the fall of a twig to be heard. The moon's light vanished as the moments passed and it rose so that the trees veiled it. And then Kit felt the cold shivers start between his shoulders and run down his back. He heard Tad's repressed breathing.

Some one was in the room with them.

Whoever it was stepped carefully across the rough floor, waited a moment, and then began to fumble among the kindling behind the stove. Kit knew that this was an ordinary way of getting a torch-light and he waited for the slight glow that would tell that the intruder had lit a match. Evidently whoever this was did not know of the presence of others. But the glow did not come. Instead he

heard the same soft, careful, slipping steps behind him. They went to the wall and he heard a slight brushing, as if some one were running a hand along the boards and feeling for something. Then there was a scratching, a slight grunt and a hard tap on the floor.

One of the nails had been pulled down, one of Tad's wire nails with the string attached.

Presently another nail fell, this time directly upon the stove. The robber had run his hand along the beam and swept it off.

It might have been an hour that the boys sat there listening to these sounds, Kit momentarily expecting that the intruder would step on them in the pitch darkness. Then the moon rose through an opening in the trees and threw a slender beam downward. Tad laughed aloud and there was the quick scurrying of unshod feet followed by silence.

"Light the lantern, Kit," said Tad.

With shaking fingers Kit managed to do this. The room was empty and both doors were still closed and locked by heavy bars from the inside.

Tad got up and went over to the wall and picked up a wire nail. He held it up before his companion. The string dangled from it still.

"You'll find another on the top of the stove," he said.

Sure enough there was a second nail with the cord still on it lying on the griddle.

"That was a ghost," said Kit slowly. "I heard it walk and here it's knocked the nails down."

"Ghosts haven't any flesh or muscle," replied Tad. "This robber was flesh and blood."

"How'd he get in?"

"Dunno. Let's go to sleep again. Nothing more to do till to-morrow."

In the early dawn Kit and Tad took a bath in the stream and ate a hearty breakfast. Tad was much preoccupied and silently devoted himself to making a rope spring for Mrs. Turnbull's bed while Kit cleaned up. When they had finished their several tasks Tad spent an hour outside the house, leaving Kit to scout further away and catch fish for lunch from the stream. Then Tad pawed among the nasturtiums and dug gently with his hands in the mould. He was satisfied to find the tracks he was looking for. Over their midday meal the boys spent little time, though Kit had caught a dozen trout which they devoured ravenously. Then Tad said seriously, "I know who the robber is, Kit. He was in here last night and he stole this."

He held up a button off his coat.

Kit stared and then said, "Where did you find it?"

"On the floor. He was scared before he could get away with it. Now I think we can make the robber bring back everything he's stolen, and I'm going to tell you all about it."

For two hours the boys talked and discussed the matter, Kit every now and again going into peals of laughter and slapping his knee.

"Now we may not get it back to-night or to-morrow night," Tad concluded. "It might take a week. But you and I'll stay here till we get some satisfaction."

"Why not hunt for the loot?"

"Useless. That would merely spoil our trap."

The preparations the boys made all that afternoon were barely completed by nightfall and they laughed constantly at the prospect of getting the robber and making him return the money he had stolen.

But that night they had little success. Kit was discouraged but Tad insisted on persisting. "Patience will bring it," he said. "We proved part of what I thought and I'm sure the other will turn out right, too."

But when Saturday afternoon came and they heard the sound of Tommy Harris's mule bell on the trail above the cabin, both boys were embarrassed. They were more so when Mrs. Turnbull arrived, with Tommy carrying her packs on his shoulders, and immediately inquired as to how everything had gone. Tad waited till Tommy was gone his way to the next claim — where he was to spend the night — and then informed the widow that they had found nothing yet.

"The only thing we are sure of now is that Tommy had nothing to do with it, Mrs. Turnbull. This is what we have found so far."

He laid before her a silver spoon, a pair of small scissors, a large darning needle and a collection of buttons.

Mrs. Turnbull took one glance at this and then burst out, "I lost them long ago, except the scissors. They disappeared last month."

"They were brought back last night."

The widow turned pale. "Ghosts! and I have always been afraid of them anyhow!"

The boys cooked supper while Mrs. Turnbull rested. Whey they had eaten and the dishes were washed Tad took the big bright dishpan and carefully set it in the corner on top of the kindling wood.

"I always hang it up on that peg," said Mrs. Turnbull.

Kit laughed. "That's what the ghost is going to put your things into," he said.

"Nonsense."

"No, we're not making fun," Tad said seriously. "We learned this trick from some Indians and a settler told me about it, too. Just as soon as we knew who the robber was, then we thought we'd set the trap. Last night he put all that stuff back. To-night he'll bring back the gold pieces, I hope."

When Mrs. Turnbull was in bed behind her curtains and the boys were curled up on the floor, Tad called over: "Don't be scared now when you hear loud noises. That's the robber bringing back the coin."

"Please don't make fun of me," sobbed the widow. "That money is almost all I had. Don't make fun of me, boys!"

"We're not, Mrs. Turnbull," Tad responded earnestly. "You just leave it to us. You see I've fixed the lantern behind that screen so that it shines a little into the pan. You can see for yourself that we're not fooling you in any way."

When all were asleep the silence once more settled down over the lonely cabin. And there was no sound till long after midnight when Mrs. Turnbull wakened at the noise of a tinkling from the direction of the dishpan. She pulled back her curtain but could see no one. Both boys were asleep on the floor. She peered into the dusk till her eyes ached. There was no more sound and she lay back on her pillow to cry softly over her troubles. But before she could fall asleep again there was a loud crash from the dish-pan and she saw both boys on their elbows. Then Tad got up and went over and peered down into the pan.

"Mrs. Turnbull," he said eagerly, "here is part of your money."

All three stared down at the big shining twenty

dollar gold piece that lay in the bottom of the pan. Near it lay a silver dime.

When the widow had recovered her voice and Kit had brewed a pot of tea and they were all seated by the fire Tad explained exactly how he had arrived at the solution of the problem that meant the good name of Tommy Harris.

" I heard a settler tell father once that he had lost a whole set of silver spoons, one after the other, and he never found them till ten years later when he was putting a new floor on the house. The spoons were all together in one place. He didn't know who had done it, but an Indian told me afterwards that woodrats — looked like little squirrels — would pick up anything bright and run away with it. Then I heard an old Alsea Indian telling me there was a ghost up at Silver Falls that made a noise like a drum but you couldn't see him. It was some medicine he couldn't explain. One day I was up at the falls and I stayed over and heard the ghost. It was a woodrat dropping stones into an old iron pot with a hole in the bottom and an old wash boiler just under it. The medicine man knew how woodrats like to make a noise like that and he just arranged it so he could scare the others by pretending it was a ghost.

" So I put all this together, with Kit here, and we decided that the woodrats had seen your money in that hole in the beam and carried off the coins.

They hide things they can't eat so that we could never find 'em in the world. So we arranged the dishpan and a nail so that it would drop in when the woodrat came along. He came and dropped it. Then he went and got some other things and dropped them in, too. By morning we had what we gave you when you got here. See how simple it is?"

"And they will bring the rest back, too?"

"Surely. Not to-night, of course. But you can set that trap every evening and that way you'll get 'em all back."

Mrs. Turnbull was silent. Then she went quietly away to cry by herself. Tad and Kit rolled up again and slept till four o'clock when they prepared to go and meet the others. As they slipt out of the cabin the widow was still asleep. Tad grinned.

"Say, we're some detectives, we are!"

A week thereafter Tommy Harris came down the Bay for provisions. He met Tad Sheldon and Kit Carson on the beach. "Say, you scouts, do you know what happened over at Mrs. Turnbull's on Eagle Mountain? Somebody brought back her money. She needed it. Wonder who took it?"

"Why?"

"Because he brought back sixty dollars that Old Man Laughlin lost in that cabin three years ago. The old man wouldn't stay because he said it was a ghost and that's why he sold out cheap to the

widow. And now Mrs. Turnbull has plenty because Laughlin won't touch the money — says it's ha'nted."

"Good!" said the scouts together and scurried off down the beach to turn handsprings across a tide pool.

THE END